THE ICE WANDERER

and other stories

Jiro Taniguchi

凍土の旅人

FANFARE / PONENT MON

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THE ICE WANDERER and other stories

The old man traveled alone...
Such is the harsh law of the Northland.
Raising his clouded eyes, he saw the Golden Eagle.
"Ah...not yet, no...there is still something I must do!"

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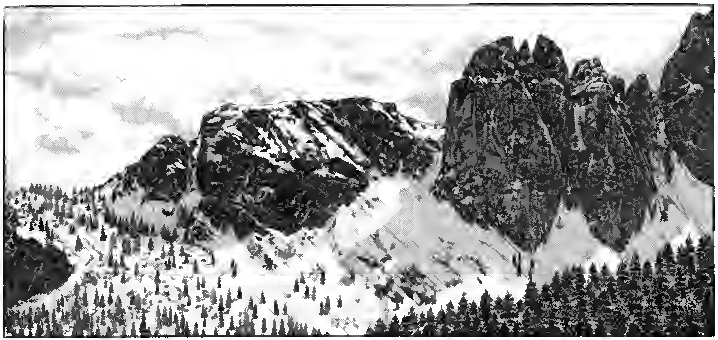
THE ICE WANDERER



SUCH IS THE HARSH LAW OF THE NORTHLAND.
THE OLD MAN TRAVELED ALONE...

HUF
HUF
HUF
SCREE
CRE
RAISING HIS CLOUDED EYES, HE SAW THE GOLDEN EAGLE.
AH... NOT YET, NO...THERE IS STILL SOMETHING I MUST DO!

1897, KLONDIKE REGION IN YUKON TERRITORY, ON THE BORDER BETWEEN CANADA AND ALASKA.
BANG
BANG
BANG
BANG
DAMN!
TARGET'S TOO SMALL.
DASH IT!
MISSED AGAIN.
NUTHIN' OOIN'.
AW..

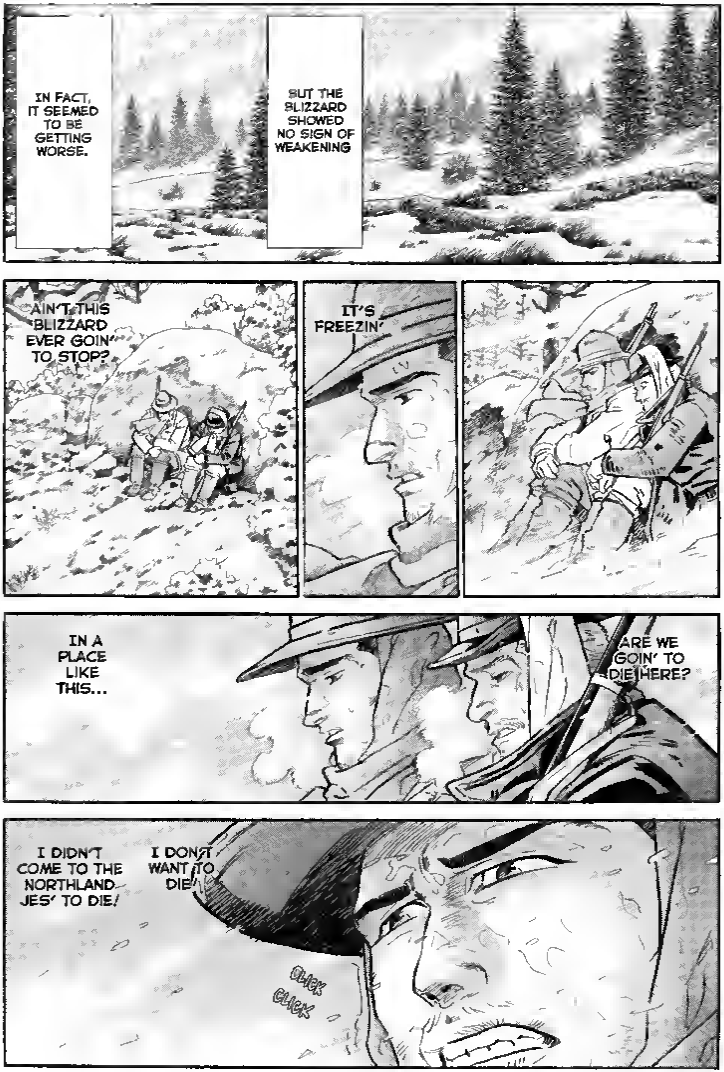
MIGHT AS WELL'VE STAYED AT THE CABIN A-PANNIN' FER GOLD.
AIN'T MY FAULT.
WE DREW STRAWS TO SEE WHO WAS TO GO A-HUNTIN'!
WHAT'LL WE DO, JACK?
WE CAN'T GO BACK EMPTY-HANDED, SURELY...
WE'VE GONE FAR 'NUFF.
MOOSE!
OH,
AIN'T THAT GRAND! BIG GAME!
JACK,
TAK' A LOOK AT THAT!
OH!
CLACK

HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
YOU IDIOT! HE HEARD YE!
OH!
THERE!
OVER THERE!
BANG
AW...
DAMN!
LET'S FOLLOW 'IM!!
GOT AWAY AGAIN!
BANG

WHOOOOOOOO
THE TRACKS STOP HERE
WHERE THE DEVIL IS HE?
DAMN
WHERE'D HE GO?
HUF
HUF
VRRUMM
DON'T LOOK TOO GOOD.
STORM'S COMIN' IN
IN THAT CASE... BETTER TURN BACK.
VRRUMM
VRRUMM

WHOOOOOOOO
I CAN'T SEE A THING
OOF,
WHERE IN HELL ARE WE NOW?
PFF
HUF
HUF
PFF
PHEWW
WE'RE LOST!
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
OUR TRACKS ARE GONE!

HEY, FRED! YOU CAN'T SIT DOWN NOW!
POOF
PFF
I CAN'T KEEP GOIN'...
LET ME REST... JES' A BIT.
NO! IF YOU FALL ASLEEP HERE, YER DEAD!
LET'S GET BEHIND THAT ROCK!
WHOOOOO
WE'LL BE SHELTERED FROM THE WIND HERE.
HUF
HUF
FRED!!
DON'T FALL ASLEEP NOW! WAIT TILL THE BLIZZARD'S OVER! YE'LL DIE!!
FRED!!
PFF
PFF


IN FACT, IT SEEMED TO BE GETTING WORSE.
BUT THE BLIZZARD SHOWED NO SIGN OF WEAKENING
AIN'T THIS BLIZZARD EVER GOIN' TO STOP?
IT'S FREEZIN'
IN A PLACE LIKE THIS...
ARE WE GOIN' TO DIE HERE?
I DIDN'T COME TO THE NORTHLAND JES' TO DIE!
I DON'T WANT TO DIE!
CLICK CLICK

!
WHAT'S THAT...?
A GRIZZLY?!
AN' THE LOCK IS STUCK!
MY HANDS ARE FROZEN, I CAN'T COCK THE HAMMER
CLICK CLICK
URGH!
CLICK

YOU STAY, DIE
BLIZZARD GET WORSE, SNOW COVER YOU.
WHY YOU HERE?
...
WE GOT LOST...
CAN'T MOVE.
STAY HERE...
...DIE.
I TAKE.
CABIN NEAR
MOVE NOW, BEFORE TOO LATE IF CAN'T WALK, CRAWL
HEY, FRED!
WAKE UP!!
GET UP, FRED!!

WARMS BODY.
CARIBOU SOUP,
PFF, PFF.
SLURP
MMM YUM.
PLEASE.
THANK YOU.
YOU EAT?
HERE, SOME JERKY.
WE'RE SAVED!
SLURP

ARE YOU ATHAPASKAN?
CHILKOOT.
US MOOSE PEOPLE. ALWAYS TRAVELIN'.
HSST
FOP
THAT IS WHAT I WAS CALLED.
ZING HA.
MAY I ASK YER NAME?
AND YER NAME?
MANY WHITE MEN COME LOOKING FOR GOLD.
YOU HERE FOR THAT TOO?
JACK LONDON
MY NAME IS JACK.
AND I'M FRED THOMPSON. YOU'VE SAVED OUR LIVES
...

WE GOT HERE 'BOUT THREE MONTHS AGO.
BUT THE ONLY THING WE'VE FOUND SO FAR IN THIS 'ERE HENDERSON CREEK IS A HANDFUL OF GOLD DUST.
YES, WE ARE.
THERE ARE TWO OTHERS IN A CAMP BY THE RIVER.
IT AIN'T ENOUGH TO GO HOME WITH.
BUT WE'VE ALREADY USED UP ALL OUR SUPPLIES.
SO, THAT'S WHY US TWO WENT HUNTIN'.
WE WERE TRACKIN' A MOOSE AND GOT LOST.
HMM...
BLIZZARD TRAP YOU.
YES, THAT'S IT.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT WOULD HAVE HAPPENED IF YOU HADN'T RESCUED US.

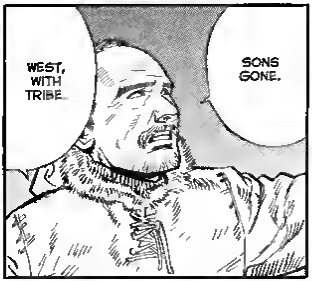
MORE AND MORE WHITE MEN
ON OUR LAND, IN OUR WOODS
GOOD FOR WHITE MAN, BAD FOR US
...
Plop
Plop
Plop
MAN'S GREED
..NO LIMITS
WHOOOOOO
YELLOW STONE, DEVIL'S STONE
PUTS DEVIL IN MAN'S HEART
...
LESS AND LESS ANIMALS IN MOUNTAINS
PFF
EVIL STONE
THREATEN OUR PEOPLE'S WAY OF LIFE

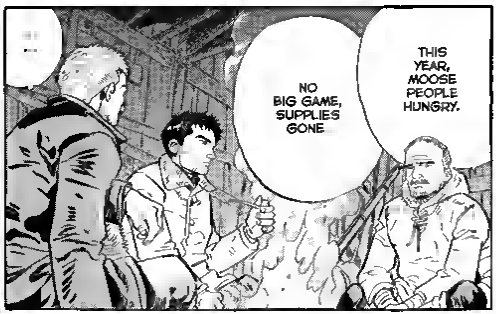
WHOOOOOOO

DON'T YOU HAVE ANY FAMILY?
YOU LIVE ALONE IN THIS CABIN?
HELPS RELAX SOMETIMES
SMOKE,

THANKS.
YES
YOU SMOKE?

THIS YEAR BLIZZARD BLOW EARLY.
BIG CARIBOU HERDS NOT COME.

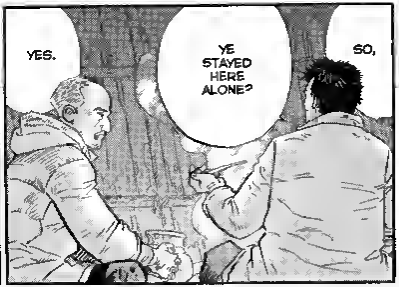

WEST, WITH TRIBE.
SONS GONE.


NO BIG GAME, SUPPLIES GONE
THIS YEAR, MOOSE PEOPLE HUNGRY.

MY EYES CLOUDY, CAN'T SEE.
CAN'T SHOOT RIFLE.
CAN'T KEEP UP WITH HUNTERS.

OUR PEOPLE DECIDE TO FOLLOW CARIBOU.

US STAY ALONE, AT THE END.
TIME COME FOR ME TO REST.

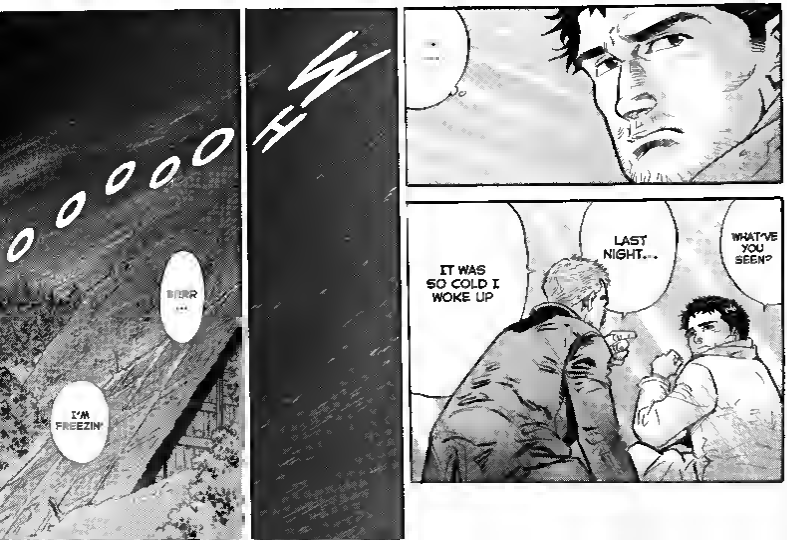

YES.
YE STAYED HERE ALONE?
SO,

OUR WAY.
NOT SPECIAL.

CRACKLE
D'YOU REALIZE? GRAMPS'S BEEN ABANDONED BY HIS TRIBE
JACK!
WHOOOOOOOO
ALL OF A SUDDEN, JACK REMEMBERED HIS NATIVE OAKLAND...
WHERE HIS IMPOVERISHED FAMILY HAD BEEN LEFT BEHIND WHEN HE CAME NORTH IN HOPES OF FINDING GOLD.

NEXT MORNING
SURE!
SHAKE
OOOAA HHH
GRAMPS IS NO LONGER HERE, HE'S GONE
ARE YOU STILL ASLEEP OR WHAT? HE MUST HAVE GONE A-HUNTIN' OR SOMETHIN'...
HMMM
HEY, JACK, WAKE UP
HMMM

JACK,
D'YOU REMEMBER THAT OLD INJUN TALE YE TOLD ME?
WHAT TALE?
...
...
THE ONE ABOUT BLIZZARDS... AND HOW GHOSTS APPEAR, BLOWN IN BY THE WIND...
AH, YES...
Brrrrr!
Brrrrr!
I RECKON I MIGHT'VE SAID SOMETHIN' 'BOUT THAT
WELL, I'VE SEEN ONE!


...
WHAT'VE YOU SEEN?
LAST NIGHT...
IT WAS SO COLD I WOKE UP
WHOOOOSH
BRRR ...
I'M FREEZIN'

'CAUSE I KNOW INJUNS DON'T SLEEP ALL THAT MUCH...
AT THE TIME, I THOUGHT NUTHIN' OF IT.
IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT?
GRAMPS WAS STILL UP.
GRAMPS GOT UP QUIETLY
..AS WHAT SCAIRT ME.
SO, IT WARN'T THAT..
LEFT WITHOUT MAKIN' A SOUND.
AND..

I SAW GRAMPS JUST WALK THROUGH THE CLOSED DOOR!
LIKE.. LIKE A GHOST!
NO, NO,
IT AIN'T THAT!
SOUNDS RIGHT
FOR A HUNTER
ME, I COULDN'T SHUT MY EYES ALL NIGHT LONG!
AND HE AIN'T COME BACK...
I WAS SCAIRT STIFF!
OUTSIDE IT WAS PITCH-DARK AND 'SIDES, THE BLIZZARD WAS STILL BLOWIN'.
CREAK
YOU WERE DREAMIN'
A DREAM..
OOO-AAHHH
YOU REALLY THINK SO?
HMPH...
BAH...
YOU SURE THAT BLIZZARD HASN'T TOUCHED YER HEAD?

BLIZZARD STOP. YOU GO NOW,
GET TO HENDERSON CREEK BEFORE DARK.
... THANKS FOR EVERYTHIN'
I GO CHECK TRAPS GO THAT FAR WITH YOU.
AH, LOOK HERE.
RABBIT COME BY.
STOP HERE,
AND PRICK UP EAR.
SCARED.

HERE, MORE TRACKS. BIG ONES.
LYNX CLAWS.
CHASE RABBIT. GET CLOSE.
TRACKS FAR APART
RUNNING
THEN RABBIT
TURN BACK
CATCH 'IM HERE
NO MORE RABBIT TRACKS
DEEP TRACKS
HERE LYNX BIG LEAP
YOU KNOW HOW SHOOT,
BUT NOT HOW TRACK.
LIFE HERE VERY HARD.
YOU SEE?

DON'T BLAME BUT HAVE TO SAY
YOUR LIFE PRECIOUS. WANT TO LIVE, GO 'WAY FROM MOUNTAIN.
....
ZING HA,
TEACH US TO HUNT
NO, CAN'T.
SOON I GO
HAVE SOMETHING MUST DO..
TO SAVE OUR PEOPLE
SOON,
COMING FOR ME
BEFORE DIE, MUST FIND OUR LORD.
.. LORD?
YES, BIG WHITE MOOSE
SWOOSH

IF I ASK OUR LORD, OUR PEOPLE BE SAVED
CARIBOU RETURN.
"LORD OF THE NORTH" LIVE IN ICE HILLS
BIG WHITE MOOSE?
HUH?
LOTS OF FRESH MEAT AND FISH FOR OUR CHILDREN
AND IN SUMMER, MANY SALMON COME BACK TO YUKON RIVER
WOODCHUCK, BIGHORN SHEEP
...
FEW HAVE SEEN
AMAZIN'... ARE THERE WHITE MOOSE?
OLD DAYS WHEN OUR PEOPLE HAVE PLENTY...
I REMEMBER...

EVEN US, MOOSE PEOPLE. .
FEW HUNTERS SEE BIG WHITE MOOSE.
AAOOOOO
MAYBE...
OHH ..
SABLE!
FOLLOW SNOWSHOE RABBIT
NOT OFTEN IN TRAP

RIGHT?
YOU NO FOOD
YOU TAKE
LEAVE YOU HERE.
WE CAN HAVE IT?
WE WILL NEVER FORGET YOU.
ZING HA, WE ARE OBLIGED TO YOU
THANK YOU SO MUCH!
NEXT ONE RABBIT. NOT WORRY
ME, SET TRAP AGAIN
WE WILL PRAY..
..THAT YE FIND THE BIG WHITE MOOSE.
SURE I FIND!

I KNEW GRAMPS WAS A BIT...
WHOEVER HEARD OF A WHITE MOOSE?!
YOU STILL THINK HE'S A GHOST?
A WHITE MOOSE...?
RUNCH RUNCH
WELL, HE SAVED OUR LIVES
AND, LOOK AT THIS!
IT'S A FINE GIFT
ALL HE DID WAS TELL TALL TALES!
NO, BUT..
I WONDER WHAT JIM AND SLOPER
ARE UP TO NOW?
THEY'RE A-WAITIN' FOR US WITH EMPTY BELLIES...

AH HA HA HA
AT LAST, YER STILL ALIVE, YE'VE MADE IT BACK!
WE THOUGHT THE BLIZZARD HAD BURIED YE!
YER TWO LUCKY STIFFS, FOR SURE!
WOW!
HERE!
PLOP
DANG!
BY THE WAY,
WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE DONE IF WE HADN'T COME BACK?
IDIOTS!
WHAT ABOUT FOOD?
PLONG
HEH HEH HEH HEH
WE'VE A LITTLE SURPRISE FOR YE TOO...
WHAT'S UP?

YESTERDAY WE DUG 'ROUND BY THE UPPER PART OF THE STREAM, WHERE WE HADN'T BEFORE 'CAUSE OF THE STRONG CURRENT.
IT'S GOLD, CAN'T YOU SEE?
THIS..
WE'VE MADE IT, AT LAST!
SO?
AND WE FOUN' THIS!
THERE'S GOT TO BE A SEAM IN THE RIVER BED!
...
WE'RE RICH!
AHA HAHA HAH
AT LAST!
HURRAH!
WHAD'YE MEAN JACK?
HUH?!
...GOIN' BACK TO CAMP STEWART.
I'M...
LISTEN TO ME, ALL OF YOU.
...

WE DON'T EVEN KNOW HOW TO HUNT RIGHT!
WHAT ARE WE GOIN' TO EAT?
HOW'RE WE GOIN' TO SURVIVE?
DON'T YE WANT ANY?
WHAT ABOUT THE GOLD?
ARE YE NUTS OR WHAT?
IF WE STAY HERE, WE'LL DIE.
WINTER'S GONNA TRAP US!
IF WE DON'T LEAVE NOW . .
...
...AND WE'RE ALREADY HAVIN' TROUBLE GITTIN' ANYTHING TO EAT!
IT'S ONLY JUST THE FALL NOW
ANYONE WHO WANTS TO GO CAN LEAVE!
'S FAR AS I'M CON-CERNED,
WE CAN'T WAIT TILL SPRING!
WE'VE GOT TO GET DOWN TO CAMP STEWART BEFORE THE RIVER FREEZES OVER.

KLAK
CLACH CLATCH
DON'T WORRY 'BOUT FOOD!
DEER, BEAR, I'LL SHOOT ANYTHING WE NEED!
ME TOO!
ME, I'M STAYIN'!
THIS 'ERE'S OUR MINE! AIN'T NO ONE'S GONNA TAKE IT FROM US!
AND YOU WANT US TO QUIT JUST WHEN WE'VE FOUND A VEIN, IS THAT IT?
YES.
DON'T YE, JACK?
YOU KNOW WHAT IT'S TAKEN US TO GET HERE,
KLACH
THAT'S CRAP!
WE LEAVE NOW, AND NEXT SPRING OTHER MINERS WILL OF GOT A HOLD OF OUR GOLD!
IT'S NOT QUITTIN'!
WE CAN COME BACK NEXT SPRING!

AND YE CAN LEAVE THAT CRITTER ON THE TABLE!
I AIN'T GONNA SHARE NUTHIN' WITH A CHICKEN-SHIT LIKE YOU!
CLEAR OUT, JACK!
GET!
CLEAR OUTTA HERE!!!
ONE BIT OF GOLD AND YOU LOSE YER HEAD!
ARE YOU OUT OF YER MIND?
JIM!
CALM DOWN! IF YOU STAY HERE, YER GOING TO DIE!
JIM...
IF YOU DO, I'LL KILL YOU!
AND DON'T BREATHE A WORD ABOUT THIS TO ANYONE!
WHAT THE...
GO ON, SHOOT
IF YOU DARE!!!
CLICK
WAIT, JIM!!!
HOLD IT!!
GET OUT!!!

FRED
IF YE WANT TO LEAVE, YER ON YER OWN'
AIN'T NO ONE'S A-GOIN' WITH YOU, JACK
SORRY, JACK I... I'M STAYIN' TOO
FRED! SLOPER!
IT'S OUR LAST CHANCE TO GET OUTTA HERE ALIVE

CLATCH
LAST WARNING!

IN THE END, ALL THREE OF THEM PERISHED...

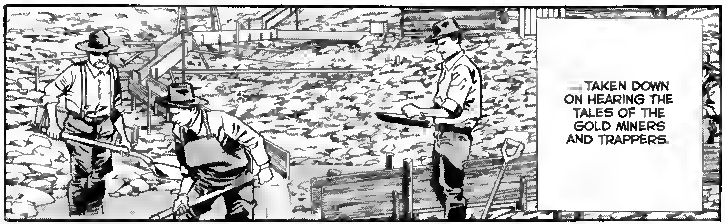
I WENT BACK DOWN THE HENDERSON ALONE...
IF I HADN'T MET THAT OLD INDIAN...
I WOULDN'T BE ALIVE NOW, NO DOUBT ABOUT IT.
HUF
HUF
HUF
AND REACHED CAMP STEWART THREE DAYS LATER...

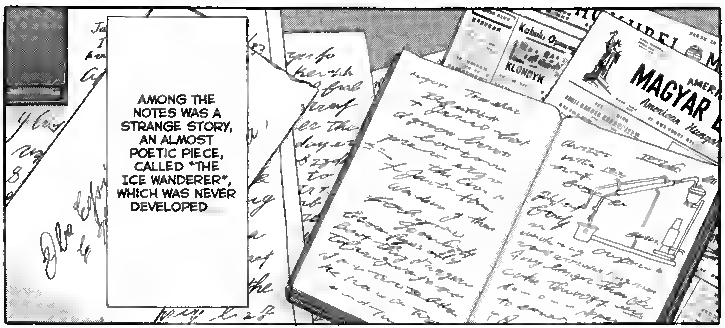
THE FOLLOWING SPRING I WENT TO DAWSON CITY, THEN DOWN THE YUKON AND BACK TO CALIFORNIA VIA THE BERING SEA.
I WONDERED IF THE OLD INDIAN EVER FOUND HIS WHITE MOOSE.

1988
A NOTEBOOK WAS FOUND IN AN OLD LEATHER BAG IN THE BASEMENT...
HAWAII, IN A DILAPIDATED OLD HOUSE WHICH WAS AWAITING THE WRECKER'S BALL...
THE NAME INSIDE THE FRONT COVER WAS JACK LONDON, THE POPULAR EARLY 20TH CENTURY WRITER.

IT CONTAINED THE NOTES THAT WERE LATER USED TO WRITE "THE CALL OF THE WILD" AND OTHER ALASKAN STORIES.
EXPERTS CONCLUDED THAT THE NOTEBOOK WAS A FAREWELL GIFT TO HIS FAVORITE JAPANESE SERVANT, IN RECOGNITION OF HIS MANY YEARS OF GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVICE.

THEY WERE HURRIED JOTTINGS ABOUT HIS EXPERIENCES IN THE KLONDIKE DURING THE GOLD RUSH.

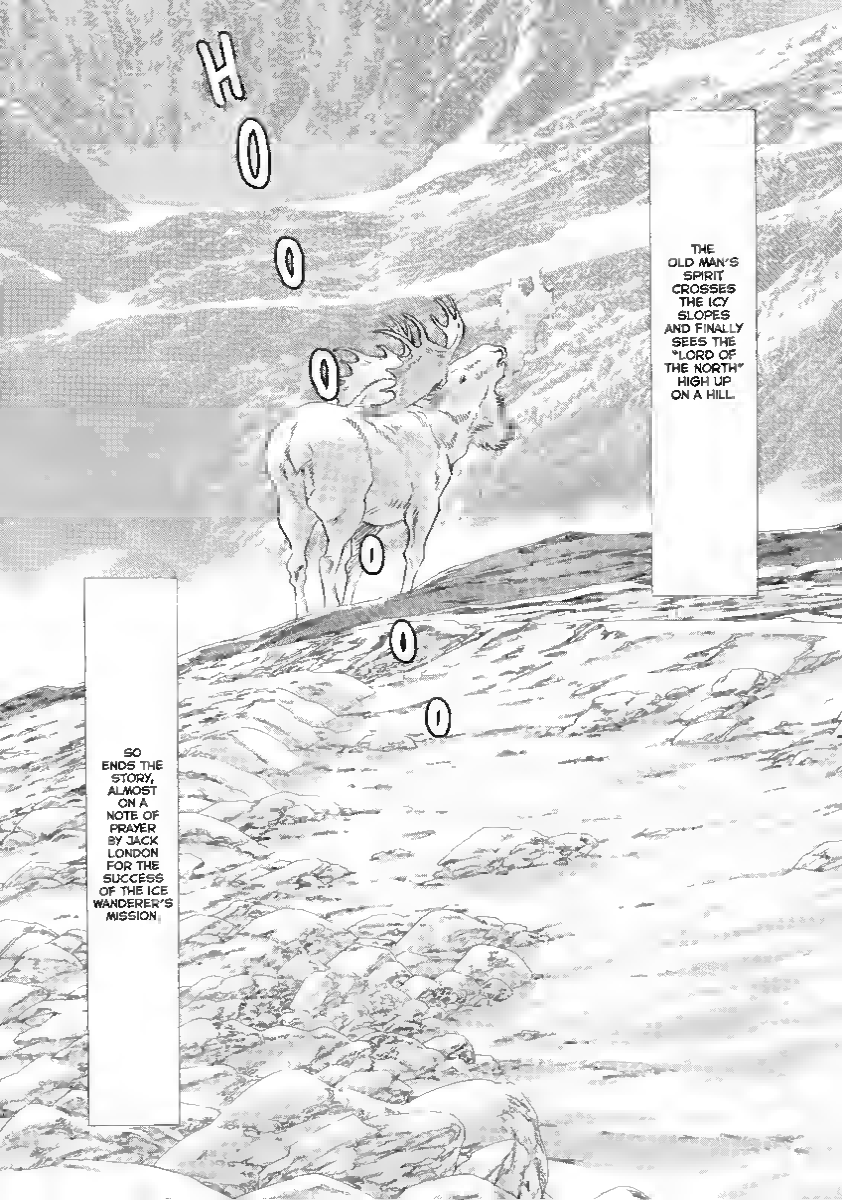

—TAKEN DOWN ON HEARING THE TALES OF THE GOLD MINERS AND TRAPPERS.

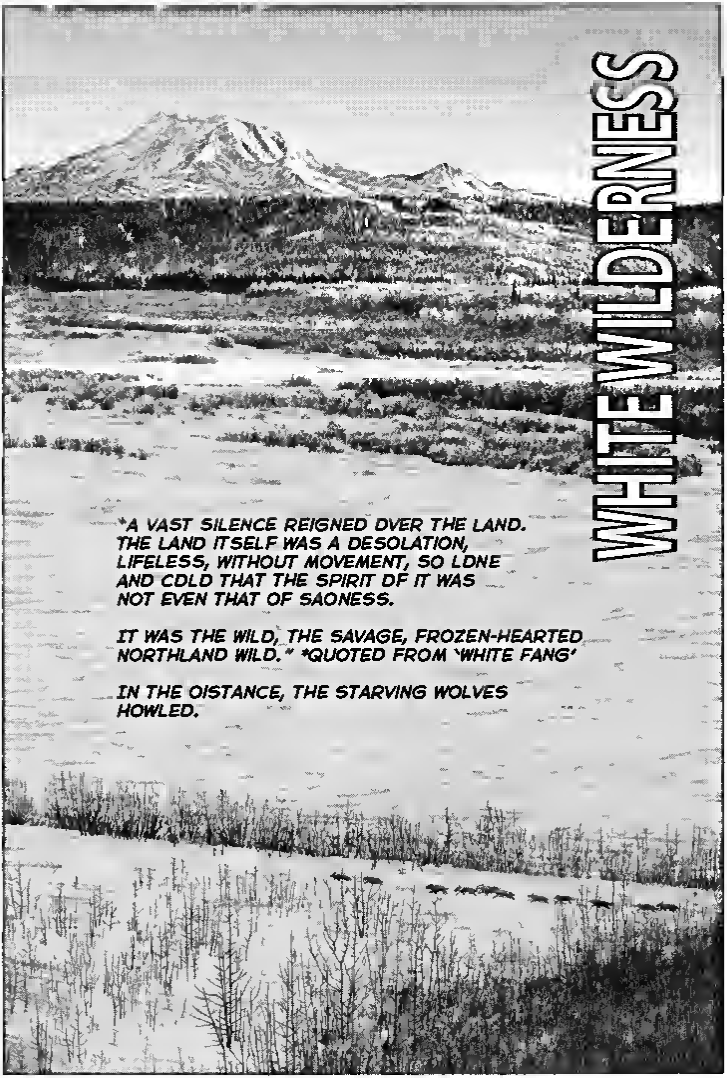

AMONG THE NOTES WAS A STRANGE STORY, AN ALMOST POETIC PIECE, CALLED "THE ICE WANDERER", WHICH WAS NEVER DEVELOPED
KLONDYK
MAGYAR

THE GOLDEN EAGLE LEADS ME TO THE WHITE MOOSE.
SO SAY OUR PEOPLE'S LEGENDS.

WHOEVER SEES THE GREAT WHITE MOOSE, THE "LORD OF THE NORTH",
WILL BE REBORN AS SHAOSHA, A MAN-GOD, AND SAVE THE MOOSE PEOPLE FROM STARVATION.

BRRRLL

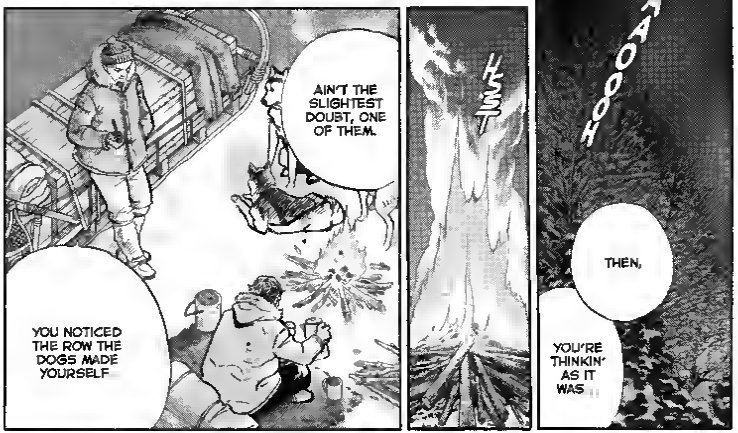

H
O
O
O
O
O
THE OLD MAN'S SPIRIT CROSSES THE ICY SLOPES AND FINALLY SEES THE "LORD OF THE NORTH" HIGH UP ON A HILL.
SO ENDS THE STORY, ALMOST ON A NOTE OF PRAYER BY JACK LONDON FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE ICE WANDERER'S MISSION.


WHITE WILDERNESS
"A VAST SILENCE REIGNED OVER THE LAND. THE LAND ITSELF WAS A DESOLATION, LIFELESS, WITHOUT MOVEMENT, SO LONE AND COLD THAT THE SPIRIT OF IT WAS NOT EVEN THAT OF SADNESS.
IT WAS THE WILD, THE SAVAGE, FROZEN-HEARTED NORTHLAND WILD." *QUOTED FROM 'WHITE FANG'
IN THE DISTANCE, THE STARVING WOLVES HOWLED.

ALASKA. THE YUKON RIVER BASIN.
I AIN'T SEEN A RABBIT SIGN FOR DAYS.
HUF
HUF
UGH
UGH
UGH
PFF
AAOOH
HUF
HUF
UGH
UGH
UGH
UGH
UGH
THEY'RE AFTER US, HENRY.
YEAH, THEY'RE HUNGRY
AAOOH
AAOOH

WOOF
WOOF
HEY!
WOOF
WOOF
HOW MANY DOGS WE GOT, HENRY?
AAOOOOOH
WOOF
WOOF
WE'VE GOT SIX
WHAT D'YE MEAN?
WHAT?
THERE WAS SEVEN OF 'EM THAT GOT FISH.
BUT
WE'VE GOT SIX DOGS.
ONE, TWO,
THREE, FOUR,
FIVE, SIX
NO,
I WON'T SAY THEY WAS ALL DOGS I SAW ONE RUN OFF ACROSS THE SNOW.
YOU COUNTED WRONG, YOU'RE TIRED...
I TOOK SIX FISH OUT OF THE BAG AN' I GAVE ONE FISH TO EACH DOG.
BUT I WAS ONE FISH SHORT SO I COME BACK TO THE BAG AND GOT ANOTHER ONE.

BAM
LISTEN, BILL,
THIS LOAD OF CURS IS GETTIN' ON YOUR NERVES!
IT DON'T SURPRISE ME, IT'S BEEN TWO WEEKS SINCE WE STARTED ON THIS TRIP.
I'LL BE MIGHTY GLAD
WHEN THIS TRIP'S OVER.
HENRY...
SO WHEN I SAW IT RUN OFF, I LOOKED AN' SAW ITS TRACKS IN THE SNOW!
I THOUGHT OF THAT.
HMM...
I THINK I'M BEGINNIN' TO SEE THINGS.
ME TOO,
HERE, LOOK!
YOU CAN STILL SEE 'EM!
THEN I COUNTED THE DOGS AND THERE WAS STILL SIX OF THEM!
DAMN ODD, I SAY


AIN'T THE SLIGHTEST DOUBT, ONE OF THEM.
YOU NOTICED THE ROW THE DOGS MADE YOURSELF
HSSH
AOOOAA
THEN,
YOU'RE THINKIN' AS IT WAS

AAA-OOOOH
AAAA OOOH
AAAA OOOH

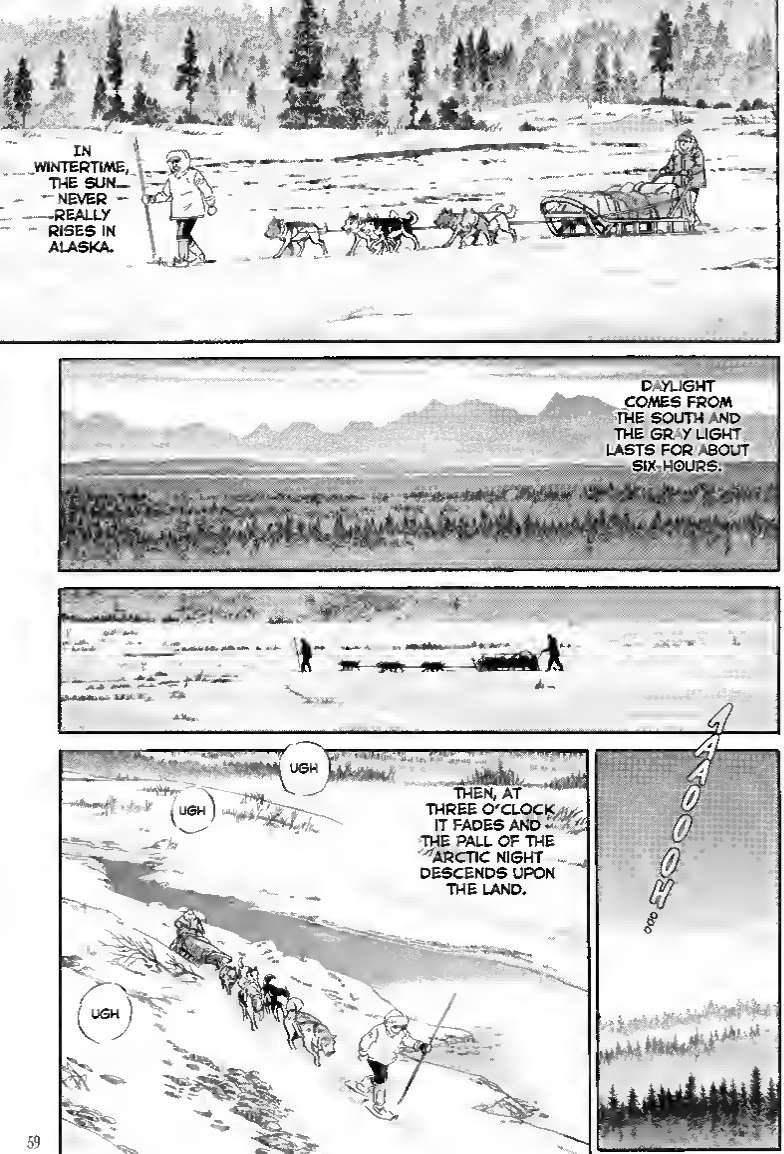
HERE, DRINK THIS AN' GO TO SLEEP.
YOU WAS NEVER LIKE THIS BEFORE
HEH, HEH, THANKS'
BILL,
YOU'RE BOTHERIN' TOO MUCH
I'M A-THINKIN'
THEY'RE ALMIGHTY CLOSE.

...COMES A BUTTIN' ROUND THE GOD-FORSAKEN ENDS OF THE EARTH...
IS WHY A CHAP LIKE LORD ALFRED...
WHAT GETS ME...
SLURP
I CAN'T EXACTLY SEE WHY!
BUT...
I RECKON HE COME SAME'N US, LOOKIN' FOR GOLD!
THAT A LORD OR SOMETHIN' IN HIS OWN COUNTRY, AN' THAT'S NEVER HAD TO BOTHER ABOUT GRUB NOR BLANKETS.
YEAH, WE AIN'T GOT PEOPLE AN' MONEY LIKE HIM. LONG-DISTANCE FUNERALS AIN'T SOMETHIN' YOU AN' ME CAN EXACTLY AFFORD.
'SIDES HE GOT SICK AND DIED.
HOWBEIT, IT'S MADE A JOB FOR US!
HE MIGHT OF LIVED TO A RIPE OLD AGE IF HE'D STAYED HOME.
THAT'S RIGHT.

WHOA
THERE'RE A LOT OF 'EM.
AN' WITH EMPTY BELLIES
AAAA-OOOH
AAAA OOOH
BUT... EVEN SO
THREE
WAIT, BILL, HOW MANY CARTRIDGES D'YOU HAVE LEFT?
I'LL FILL THEIR BELLIES WITH LEAD, ME!
AAAOOOH
POP
GOOD LUCK. DEPENDS ON HOW MANY CARTRIDGES YE HAVE.
YOU JES' SHUT UP NOW, AND LET'S GO TO SLEEP.
PUT MORE WOOD ON THE FIRE

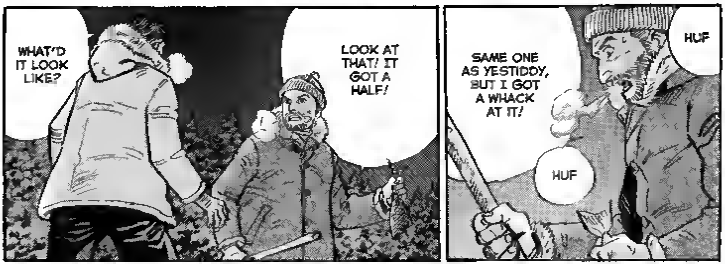
HUH?
WOOF
WOOF
WOOF
HM.
HAH!
WOOF
WOOF
WOOF
WOOF
WOOF
WOOF
WOOF
WOOF
WOOF
WOOF
WOOF
WOOF
WOOF
WOOF
SPRING
DAMN CRITTER !!
SAY, HENRY, HOW MANY DOGS DID YE SAY WE HAD?
WHAT'S WRONG NOW? THERE'S SIX.
YOU BOTHERIN' ABOUT THERE BEIN' SEVEN AGAIN?
HISH
POP
OOF, HE'S BOLD THAT ONE
COMIN' IN HERE LIKE THAT.
ADD MORE WOOD.
LA-OOH

THEY'D'VE KICKED UP A FUSS!
HOW?
THEY'VE TAKEN 'IM!
IT'S FATTY.
THE HELL? YOU SURE.
ONE'S GONE
NO, FIVE.
DAMN 'EM!
NO CHANCE AT ALL!
I BET HE WAS YELPIN' AS HE WENT DOWN THEIR THROATS
AA-OOH
AA-OOH
COME BA-ACK!!
FATTYYYY!!
TWEEET
TWEEET
WHOOOOOOOO
HE WAS A FOOL DOG
I ALWAYS DID THINK THERE WAS SOMETHING WRONG WITH 'IM ANYWAY


IN WINTERTIME, THE SUN... NEVER REALLY RISES IN ALASKA.
DAYLIGHT COMES FROM THE SOUTH AND THE GRAY LIGHT LASTS FOR ABOUT SIX HOURS.
UGH
UGH
UGH
THEN, AT THREE O'CLOCK IT FADES AND THE PALL OF THE ARCTIC NIGHT DESCENDS UPON THE LAND.
AAOOOH

THEY DO GET ON THE NERVES ROTTEN,
I TELL YOU,
UGH
UGH
AAAA-OOOH
DAMN 'EM!...
THEY'RE KEEPIN' UP WITH US.
I WISHT THEY'D STRIKE GAME SOMEWHERES, AN' GO AWAY....
AN' LEAVE US ALONE.
DARKNESS SOON SETTLES AGAIN OVER THE FROZEN AND SILENT WILD
AAAA-OOOH
HOOOAAA
HOOOAAA

BILL!!
WHAT'S UP?
SWM
WHACK
YELP!
UGH
UGH
UGH
WOLF
WOLF
WOLF
HAH!!
RASCAL!!


WHAT'D IT LOOK LIKE?
LOOK AT THAT! IT GOT A HALF!
SAME ONE AS YESTIDDY, BUT I GOT A WHACK AT IT!
HUF
HUF

WHATEVER IT IS, COMES IN HERE AT FEEDIN' TIME AN' GETS ITS WHAT OF FISH.
MUST BE A TAME WOLF, I RECKON.
NOT A WOLF?
A DOG?
...
WHA, WHAT'D IT LOOK LIKE?
COULDN'T SEE... BUT IT LOOKED LIKE ANY DOG

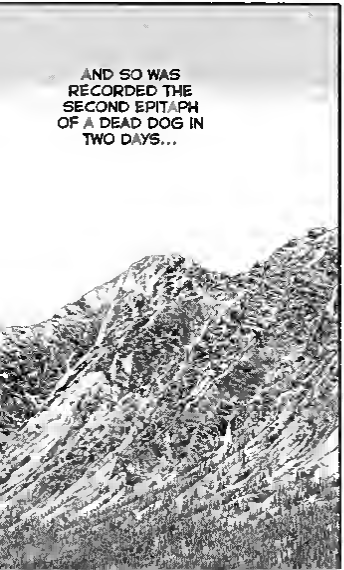
IT'S BEEN 50 BELOW FOR TWO WEEKS NOW
...AN' I WISHT THIS COLD SNAP'D BREAK
AN' I WISHT THE TRIP WAS OVER AND DONE WITH
THAT'S WHY THERE AIN'T NO GAME.
HENRY, I CAN'T STOP A-THINKIN' I WISHT I'D NEVER STARTED ON THIS TRIP.
AN' I WISHT WE WAS PULLING INTO FORT MCGURRY RIGHT NOW.
... AN' YOU AN' ME WAS A SITTIN' BY THE FIRE DRINKIN' AN' PLAYIN' CRIBBAGE.
SLURRP
YOUR STOMACH'S SOUR. THAT'S WHAT'S AILIN' YOU
SWALLOW A SPOONFUL OF SODY, AND YOU'LL SWEETEN UP WONDERFUL.
SCRAPE
BILL, SHUT UP
YOUR WISHIN' AND YOUR CROAKIN'.

WHOOOOOO

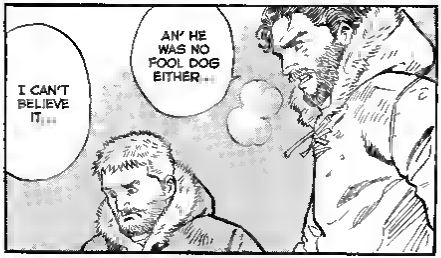
NO!?

FROG'S GONE!!

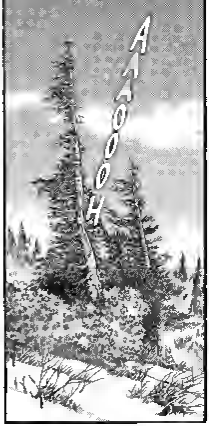
HEY!
HENRY !!
HELLO!
WHAT'S UP NOW?

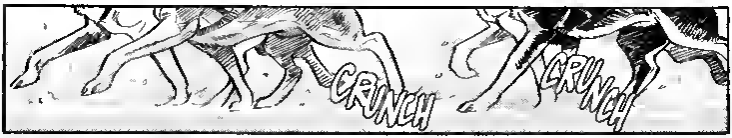

AND SO WAS RECORDED THE SECOND EPITAPH OF A DEAD DOG IN TWO DAYS...

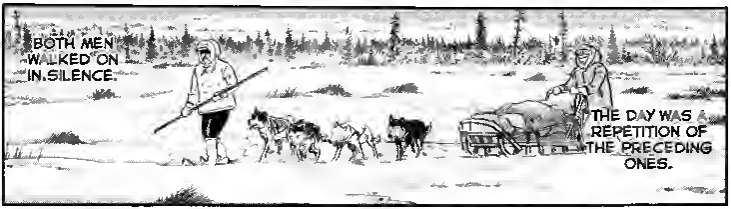
FROG .
...WAS THE STRONGEST DOG OF THE BUNCH ..
DID YOU TIE THEM UP WELL?


AN' HE WAS NO FOOL DOG EITHER ..
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT...

JUST FOUR DOGS REMAINED...
SILENCE REIGNED ONCE MORE OVER THE FROZEN LAND.


AAAOOOH


CRUNCH
CRUNCH


BOTH MEN WALKED ON IN SILENCE.
THE DAY WAS A REPETITION OF THE PRECEDING ONES.

AAAOOH
AAOOH
AAOOH
AAAOOH
THE SILENCE WAS UNBROKEN SAVE BY THE CRIES OF THEIR PURSUERS.

THAT'LL HOLD 'EM
SO THEY WON'T BE ABLE TO CHEW 'EMSELVES LOOSE AND RUN OFF.

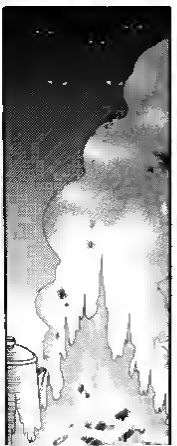
THERE,
THAT'LL FIX YOU FOOL CRITTERS

IF ONE OF 'EM TURNS UP MISSIN',
I'LL GO WITHOUT MY COFFEE!
I'LL TAKE IT!

YOU JES' BET THEY WILL,
WHAT D'YE SAY, HENRY?
WHAT'S THAT?

...THEN,
...THEY'D BE MORE RESPECTFUL, THAT'S FOR SURE!

...THEY COME CLOSER EVERY NIGHT
LOOK AT THAT!
IF WE COULD PUT A COUPLE OF SHOTS INTO 'EM...

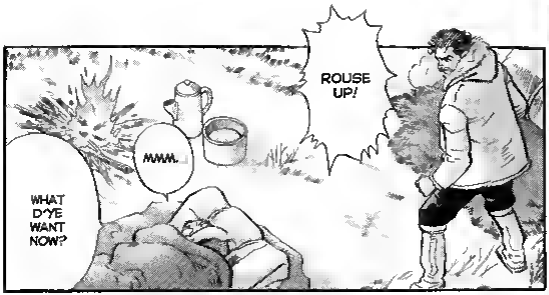


HOOF
HOOF
HOOF
HOOF

I NEVER SEEN A RED WOLF BEFORE
WOOF
WOOF
HENRY, LOOK AT THAT!
KIND OF A STRANGE COLOR FOR A WOLF.
HOOF
HOOF
HOOF

THEY DON'T SEEM SCAIRT MUCH!
THESE FOOL DOGS,
HOOF
HOOF
HOOF

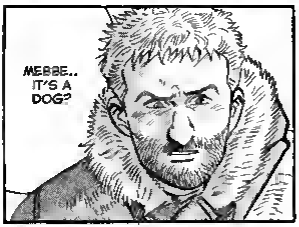
THAT ACCOUNTS FOR FATTY AN' FROG—
SHE'S THE DECOY FOR THE PACK!
UGH
UGH
WHY!
IT'S A SHE-WOLF!
OF COURSE!
THAT WAS THE ONE I LAMBASTED WITH THE CLUB!
SHE DRAWS OUT THE DOG AN' THE REST PITCHES IN AN' EATS 'M UP!
WHOOOOOOO
PAWN!
DAMN YOU!
FLY!


ROUSE UP!
MMM.
WHAT D'YE WANT NOW?

BILL!!

HE COULDN'T A-DONE IT HIMSELF!
HOW'D IT HAPPEN?

IT'S THE SHE-WOLF..
SPANKER'S GONE
WHAT?


MEBBE.. IT'S A DOG?

MUST'VE BEEN ONE EAR GNAWED 'M LOOSE

OL' VILLAN HAD A DOG ONCE...
HUH?

IT'S GOT TO BE FEMALE A WOLF AT LEAST!?

...

OL' VILLAN CRIED LIKE A BABY.
...
I OUGHTER KNOW. I SHOT IT OUT OF THE PACK...
...IN A MOOSE PASTURE OVER ON LITTLE STICK
...THAT RUN AWAY WITH A PACK OF WOLVES.
A DOG THAT KNOWS CAMP LIFE.
IT AIN'T AFEARD O' THE CAMPFIRE AN' KNOWS ENOUGH TO COME IN WITH THE DOGS AT FEEDIN' TIME AN' EATS FISH.
I'M A-THINKIN' THAT WOLF'S A DOG THAT RUN AWAY WITH THE WOLVES.
HADN'T SEEN IT FOR THREE YEARS, HE SAID.
DAMN HER!
I WISHT 'TWAS THREE HUNDRED!
YOU'VE ONLY GOT THREE CARTRIDGES!
STOP, BILL!
SHE'S A WOLF AN' TRAILS MEN
BUT NOW...
THAT WOLF THAT'S A DOG IS DEAD MEAT!
AN' IF I GET A CHANCE AT IT,
SOUB

THE DAY WAS LIKE ALL THE DAYS.
SWMP
UGH
UGH
UGH
UGH
THEY'RE COMPLETELY STARVIN'!
GOD ALMIGHTY!
THIS WAS SPANKER'S STAKE.
THEY ATE 'M HIDE AN' ALL
HEY, HENRY,
D'YOU THINK WE'LL MAKE MCGURRY?
YOU'RE ALMIGHTY BLUE
TAKES MORE'N A HANDFUL OF THEM PESKY CRITTERS TO DO FOR YOURS TRULY.
AAAOOOOOH

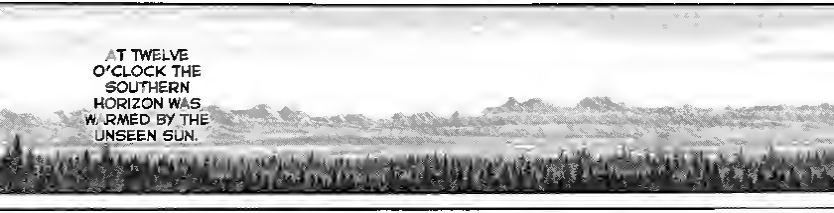
BILL!
I DON'T KNOW...
I AIN'T FEELIN' SPECIAL ENTHUSIASTIC.
LISTEN TO YOURSELF! ALREADY HALF EATEN!

I'VE BIN ...
...THROUGH A WHOLE LOT WORSE.

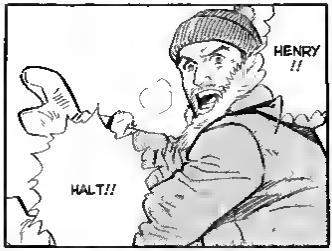
SINCE YOU GAVE UP COFFEE.
COLD'S GETTIN' TO YOU ..

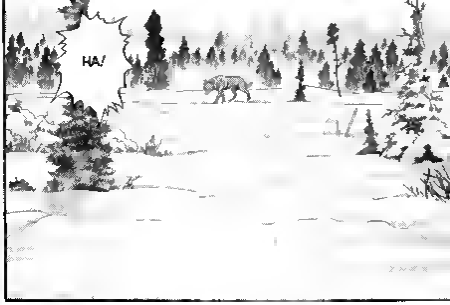
!!
...
YOU'RE OFF COLOR.
A MAN'S HALF LICKED WHEN HE SAYS HE IS.

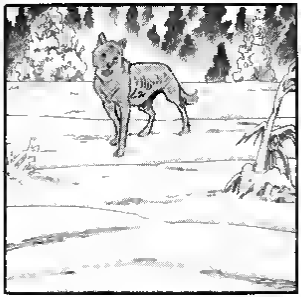
WHOOOOO


AT TWELVE O'CLOCK THE SOUTHERN HORIZON WAS WARMED BY THE UNSEEN SUN.

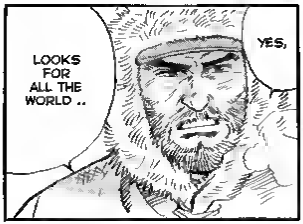
THREE DOGS COULD NOT DRAG THE SLED SO FAST.


HENRY !!
HALT!!


HA!



D'YE SEE IT, THE SHE-WOLF!


YES,
LOOKS FOR ALL THE WORLD ..

IT'S GOT AWAY WITH THREE OF OUR DOGS

LIKE A BIG HUSKY SLED DOG
I WOULDN'T BE S'PRISED TO SEE IT WAG ITS TAIL.

COME HERE!
WE AIN'T A BIT SCAIRT OF YOU!
IF IT JES'D COME IN A LITTLE CLOSER
COULDN'T MISS IT.
COME HERE!
HEY, YOU HUSKY!
CLICK
A WOLF THAT KNOWS ENOUGH ABOUT MEN'S WAYS!
DAMN BRUTE!
SHE KNOWS ALL ABOUT SHOOTIN' IRONS!
HELL!

FLUTCH
CRUNCH
WHEN THE SLED OVERTURNED ON A BAD PIECE OF TRAIL
THE MIDDAY GLOW HAD FADED INTO THE GRAY GLOOM OF THE AFTERNOON,
SHIT!
ROTTEN TRAIL!
SNAFF
CLONG
OH!
HAA!
GOT IT, FELLERS
NO WANDERIN' ABOUT
CHEE
JES' OUR LUCK
DAMN
CAN'T PUT IT TO RIGHTS WITH THE DOGS IN THE WAY
STAY!
LOOSEN 'EM

COME BACK!
HEY!
HERE, YOU, ONE EAR!
!!
IT'S THE SHE-WOLF!
DANG!
UMPH...
WHERE'S THE GUN?
HELL! IT'S JAMMED BENEATH THE SLED!
WHAM

SNIF
SNIF
HA
HA
HA
ONE EAR!
NO!
SWOK
SWIT
HELL!
TOO FAR AWAY!
AAAAOOOOH
BANG
SWIP

YIP
YIP
ONE EAR!!
AGH!
SWISH
DON'T, BILL!!!
DON'T GO!!!
NO, BILL!

BILL!
BANG
BA
NG

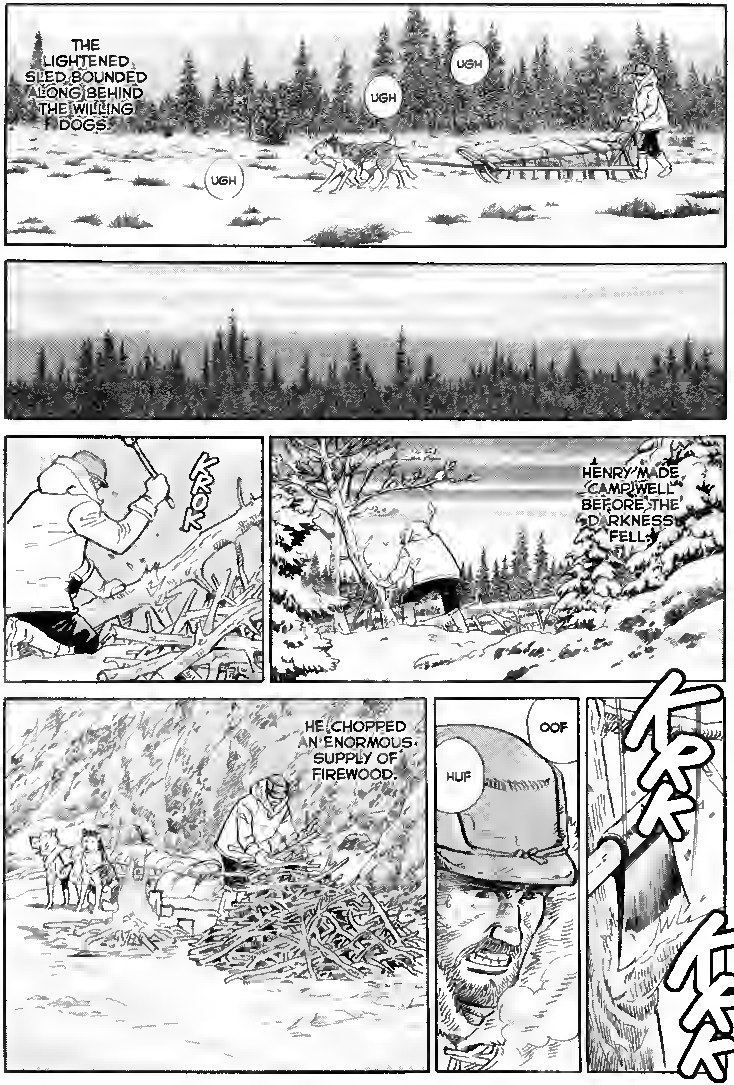
AGH!!
AA-OOH
AA-OOH
AAOOH
AAOOH
AAAOOH
AAAGH...
AAGH!
BIIILLL!

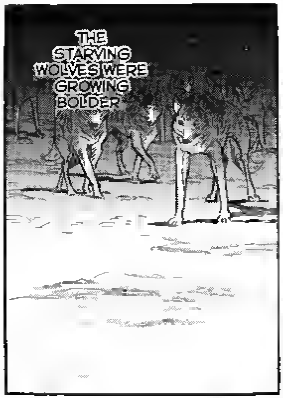
GERR-OUT!
GO!!
GRRR
SROOSH

THE PACK RETREATED FOR A MOMENT...
...BUT WAS SOON BACK IN POSITION...
YAWP
WHAP
DON'T COME NEAR ME!
AND BIT BY BIT, THE CIRCLE TIGHTENED.
SWOOP
AIN'T YOU A-GOIN' TO LET ME GET ANY SLEEP?
BRUTES !!
THE STRUGGLE LASTED ALL THROUGH THE NIGHT.

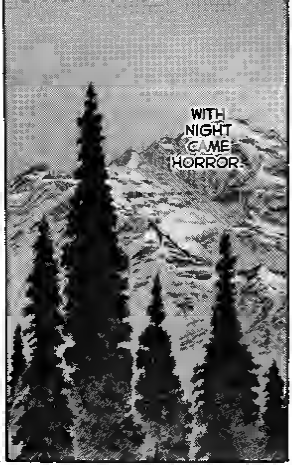
UGH
UGH
GRRR
HEAVE HO!!!
HEAVE-HO!!!
CONK
CHUFF

BUT,
LORD ALFRED, YOU JES' WAIT HERE, IF YOU PLEASE.
THEY'LL SURE NEVER GET YOU, YOUNG MAN.
THEY GOT BILL,
AN' THEY MAY GET ME,


THE LIGHTENED SLED BOUNDED ALONG BEHIND THE WILLING DOGS.
UGH
UGH
UGH
HENRY MADE CAMP WELL BEFORE THE DARKNESS FELL.
HE CHOPPED AN ENORMOUS SUPPLY OF FIREWOOD.
OOF
HUF


THE STARVING WOLVES WERE GROWING BOLDER

HSST
POP


WITH NIGHT COME HORROR

YOU'RE REMARKABLE THIN.
HOW MANY DAYS SINCE YOU LAST HAD A BITE?

YOU BRUTES!
I CAN'T STAND THE SIGHT OF YOU.

WE'LL SEE WHO SURRENDERS FIRST,
LET'S CONSIDER IT A PATIENCE TEST!

AROOH

OOH OOH
YOU AIN'T GOIN' TO GET ME, HEAR?

WHOOOOOOO
HE DOZED DESPITE HIMSELF.
BUT LACK OF SLEEP WAS TELLING ON HENRY.
GRR
GRR
WOOL
WOOL
WOOL
WOOL
WOOL
!!

HAH!
SROOSH
FSH FSH FSH
I DOZED OFF!
IF I FALL ASLEEP, I'M DONE!
GASP
OH, NO!
UGH
UGH
UGH
OWW !!
CHSH
CHSH
FNNNNT

MHF
WELL,
I NEVER...
I NEVER NOTICED HOW
THIS WONDERFUL FLESH OF MINE
WORKED SO BEAUTIFULLY AND SMOOTHLY AND DELICATELY.
THE NERVES REACH ALL OVER.

I AIN'T SO MUCH MEAT!
NOW, GIT!
MHF
YOU AIN'T A-GOIN' TO GET ME!
PFFF
SWOOK
HERE YOU ARE!
EEO
ALL NIGHT, HENRY FOUGHT OFF THE HUNGRY PACK.
AAOOH AAOOH AAOOH

MORNING CAME, BUT FOR THE FIRST TIME THE LIGHT OF DAY FAILED TO SCATTER THE WOLVES.
OHO!
SO YOU'RE A-GOIN' TO LAY ABOUT NOW...
HOO
HOO
PFFF
PFFF
BUT YOU'RE A-WASTIN' YER TIME! YOU AIN'T GOIN' TO MAKE A MEAL OF ME!
OF COURSE.
YOU'RE WAITIN' FOR ME TO GO TO SLEEP...
A-WAITIN' TILL I'M WORN DOWN...
YOU'D BE BETTER OFF HUNTIN' CARIBOU ELSEWHERE.

DON'T COME NEAR!
SWOOSH
WHOOOO
HENRY WAS BENUMBED AND DROWSY.
AGAIN THE SHORT DAY WANED AND THE VEIL OF DARKNESS ENVELOPED THE EARTH.
WOOF WOOF
PFFF
PFFF
THE NEED FOR SLEEP WAS BECOMING OVERPOWERING.

DZZZZ
GRRRR
WOOF
WOOF
WOOF
WOOF
WOOF
WOOF
KKWW
SNAARL
!!
YYYP
YYYP
WOW
WOOF
WOOF
WOOF
SPLUS

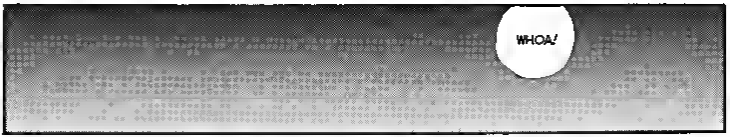
SHOOK
UFFA
UFFA
UFFA
UFFA
UFFA
UFFA
UNGH
YYYP
SRSSHHT

SKOOSH
GNNNT
UNGH
SKOOSH
YARRF
CONK
SWOOK
YYYP
COME ON THEN!
YOU AIN'T GOT ME YET!

BUT HIS SUPPLY OF FIREWOOD COULD NOT LAST LONG...
HEH!
IT'LL TEACH YOU A LESSON!
GRRRR...
YYYP
PFFF
PFFF
THE FUEL HAD RUN OUT.
AAAOOOH
PFFF
PFFF

I CAN'T STAND IT...
I'M GOIN' TO SLEEP...
YOU CAN COME AN' GET ME ANY TIME...
SHE GAZED AT HIM WITH A GREAT WISTFULNESS
ONCE HE WAKENED AND SAW THE SHE-WOLF BEFORE HIM.
THE WOLVES WERE GONE.
WHEN HE AWAKENED, A LITTLE LATER,

IN THE DISTANCE HE COULD HEAR THE CRIES OF MEN AND THE WHIMPERING OF STRAINING DOGS
AWOOF
WOOF
WOOF WOOF
AWOOOOOF
GRRRR


WHOA!

HEY!
WAKE UP!

RED SHE-WOLF...
PFFF
COME IN WITH THE DOGS AT FEEDIN' TIME...
PFFF

MMF..

HEY!!
COME ON!
WAKE UP!

AN' AFTER THAT...
...SHE ATE BILL...
HEY!
FIRST SHE ATE THE DOG'S FOOD...
THEN SHE ATE THE DOGS...
PFFF
SHE DIDN'T EAT HIM.
NO...
HE'S ROOSTIN' IN A TREE...
HA...
WHERE'S LORD ALFRED?
HULLO!
YES...
AN' IN A BOX...
AT THE LAST CAMP.
DEAD?
GOO' NIGHT
EVERYBODY
PLOP
LEMME ALONE...
I'M JES' PLUMB TUCKERED OUT...

HIS SNORES ROSE ON THE FROSTY AIR, BUT THERE WAS ANOTHER SOUND IN THE DISTANCE...

THIS WORK IS A RECONSTRUCTION OF THE FIRST VOLUME OF THE ORIGINAL TOKYOPOP RELEASE PUBLISHED BY SHINCHO TRANSLATED INTO JAPANESE BY YOKO SHIRAISHI

AOOH

AAA

OOAA

...HO

HOOOAA

OUR MOUNTAINS

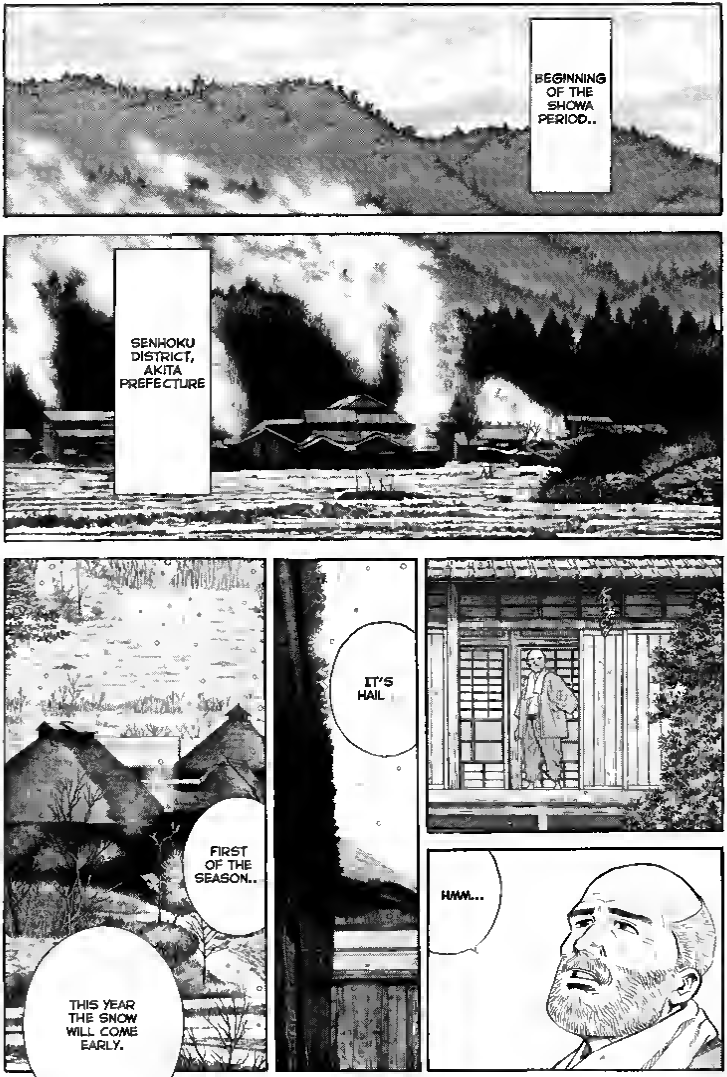
WOW
WOW
WOW
WOW
WOW
HO-EE!
HO HO-EE!
WOW
WOW
WOW
HO HO-EE!
HO-EE!
HO-EE!

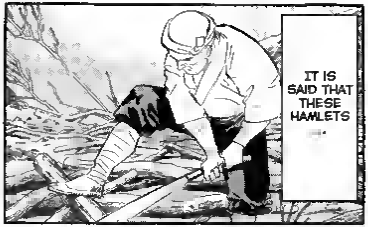
BL-ECH
BANG
HEY!
!!!
YOU GET IT?!
OOH!
TOKI-ZOOO!!
RUN!!

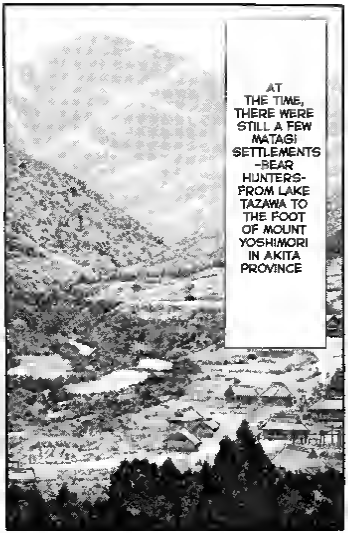
SHIT!!
AAAARGH !!
BANG
GRA AAA
EEEE

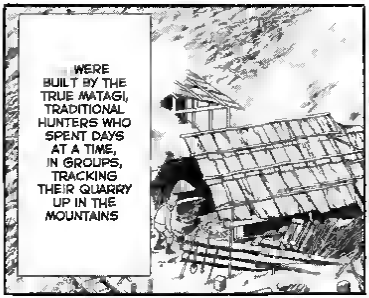
SLEP
SLEP
TOKIZŌ!!
WOW
WOW
WOW
STAY AWAKE!
UNH...
AAGH
TOKIZŌ!!
FA..
FA... THER
TOKIZŌOO !!

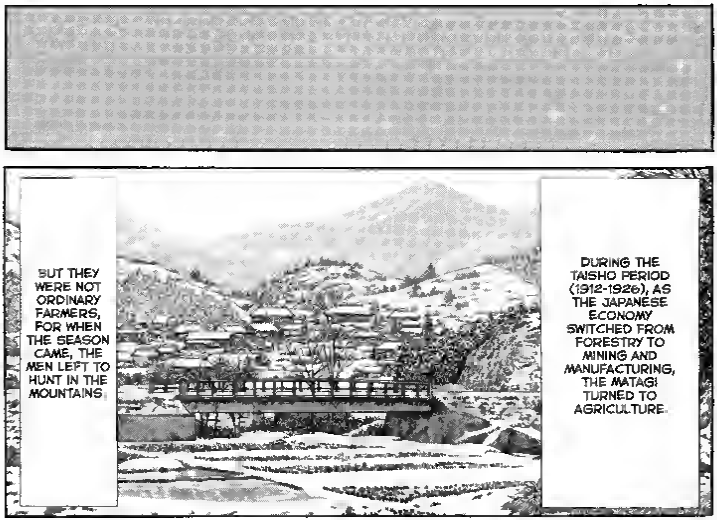
UNH...
UGH...
TO KI...
ZŌ...
GRAND-FATHER.
...
UNH...
LOOK, MORNING IS BREAKING...
AAH...
YOU'RE HAVING NIGHTMARES AGAIN


BEGINNING OF THE SHOWA PERIOD..
SENHOKU DISTRICT, AKITA PREFECTURE
THIS YEAR THE SNOW WILL COME EARLY.
FIRST OF THE SEASON..
IT'S HAIL
HMM...


IT IS SAID THAT THESE HAMLETS


AT THE TIME, THERE WERE STILL A FEW MATAGI SETTLEMENTS -BEAR HUNTERS- FROM LAKE TAZAWA TO THE FOOT OF MOUNT YOSHIMORI IN AKITA PROVINCE


WERE BUILT BY THE TRUE MATAGI, TRADITIONAL HUNTERS WHO SPENT DAYS AT A TIME, IN GROUPS, TRACKING THEIR QUARRY UP IN THE MOUNTAINS


BUT THEY WERE NOT ORDINARY FARMERS, FOR WHEN THE SEASON CAME, THE MEN LEFT TO HUNT IN THE MOUNTAINS.
DURING THE TAISHO PERIOD (1912-1926), AS THE JAPANESE ECONOMY SWITCHED FROM FORESTRY TO MINING AND MANUFACTURING, THE MATAGI TURNED TO AGRICULTURE.

FEBRUARY
HERE ALREADY!
I HARDLY FELT IT COMING ON...
HARUHIKO'S GOING TO BE
...FOUR NEXT MONTH
YES.
IT'S THREE YEARS THIS WINTER...
AS YOU GET OLDER, THE YEAR JUST FLIES..
WOOM
WOOM
...AND SINCE YOU STOPPED HUNTING, GRANDFATHER,
I DON'T WORRY AS MUCH
THAT'S RIGHT...

TOCK
TOCK
.. HE'S QUITE CAPABLE OF TELLING US HE'S GOING BACK UP INTO THE HILLS.
ONE OF THESE DAYS...
GRANDMOTHER ALWAYS SAYS SO TOO...
DON'T YOU?
YES, BUT YOU CAN NEVER TELL WITH THIS MAN. .
OH, C'MON, GRANDMOTHER
IT'S NOT THAT MY WIFE DOESN'T TRUST ME...
NO NEED TO GET ALL RILED UP NOW...
I SWORE OVER TOKIZŌ'S GRAVE.
DIDN'T I, HARU?
I WON'T TOUCH ANOTHER GUN...
UNTIL HARUHIKO IS A MAN.

WOW
WOW
WOW
ARE YOU COMING?
HARU!
YES
LET'S GO FEED SHIRO
OK...
SOON..
GRAND-FATHER,
WHEN WILL SHIRO'S PUPPIES BE BORN?
EAT UP!
ATTA GIRL, SHIRO!
I'LL GIVE YOU ONE IF YOU PROMISE YOU WILL TRAIN IT TO BE A TRUE MATAGI DOG...
I WILL!
CHOMP CHOMP
DO YOU NOW?!
I WANT ONE FOR ME!

ISN'T THAT NAGAYOSHI COMING BACK?
SO, HOW DID YOUR HUNT GO?
G'D EVENIN', MASTER GUNPACHI!
SEEMS TO ME YOU WERE GONE LONG ENOUGH...
NO
A BEAR.
INOSUKE'S BEEN HURT BADLY!
DON'T ASK.
SNOWSLIDE?
HUH?
A HUNTSMAN LIKE INOSUKE MAULED BY A BEAR?

"ROAMERS" ARE OLD BEARS WHO WANDER FROM MOUNTAIN TO MOUNTAIN ALL WINTER WITHOUT HIBERBATING.
A ROAMER
IT WAS A ROAMER COME FROM WHO KNOWS WHERE.
THAT BEAR WASN'T FROM HEREABOUTS.
WE FOUND HIS TRACKS UP ON SHIRAWA PEAK.
THEY WERE HUMONGOUS, TWICE AS BIG AS THOSE OF A REGULAR CRESCENT MOON TSUKINOWA.(2)
(2) SELENARCTOS THIBETANUS JAPONICUS THE ASIATIC BLACK BEAR OR MOON BEAR
YEAH!
LET'S GO GIT IT!
LET'S GO!
AIN'T NEVER SEEN SUCH BIG TRACKS
WHAT D'WE DO NOW?

WE STARTED STALKIN' 'IM RIGHT AWAY, BUT HE TRICKED US AND..
..GAVE US THE SLIP AFORE WE COULD SURROUND HIM...
SLASH
WAAH!!
EEEE!!
OH NO!!
HE'S GONE'N BACKTRACKED !!
HE'S RIGHT BEH!ND US!!
WAAH!!
AARGH!!

YEE AAA
GRAAA
THE DOGS FELL BACK AND PEED THEMSELVES, THEY WAS SO SCAIRT...
TOOH
CLUNC
AAGH
WE WERE TOTALLY STUNNED,
AND NOT A-ONE OF OUR BULLETS TOUCHED 'IM.
BANG
BANG
TRUTH IS, WE JUS' PANICKED.
...HE AIN'T NEVER GOIN' TO HOLD ANOTHER GUN EVER.
HIS LIFE AIN'T IN DANGER BUT...
THAT'S TOO BAD.
SO?
HOW'S INO DOIN'?
WELL....
THEY'RE TAKIN' CARE OF 'IM NOW AT THE HOSPITAL IN ODATE.

MASTER GUNPACHI,
YES
I CAN'T GO INTO THE MOUNTAINS NOW
S'IT TRUE YOU AIN'T NEVER GOIN' A HUNTIN' AGIN?
OH, I SEE
IT'S WINTER AND SHIRO'S EXPECTING PUPPIES SO I CAN'T TAKE HER HUNTING.
WELL, WON'T YOU JUS' THINK ABOUT IT SOME?
OH! I ALMOST FORGOT...
IF YOU'D JUST HEAD THE HUNT,
I RECKON IT WOULD BE NO TROUBLE AT ALL SURROUNDIN' THAT OLD ROAMER AND SHOOTIN' 'IM DOWN.
THAT OLD ROAMER
HE WAS MISSIN' AN EAR AIN'T THAT THE BEAR YOU WAS LOOKIN' FOR?
...
...

IF WE DON'T GET RID OF 'IM SOON, HE'S GONNA GET REAL DANGEROUS.
A REAL MONSTER. START ACTIN' LIKE HE'S KING OF THE MOUNTAIN.
WE CAN'T JUS' LET A BEAR THAT BIG HAVE THE RUN OF THESE HILLS FOREVER.
WELL,
I CAN'T SAY...
WOW WOW
SORRY TO OF SOTHERED YOU
WELL, NOW, MASTER GUNPACHI.
S' ALRIGHT
IT WAS HIM... THE MONSTER HAD COME BACK.

SO HE WAS STILL ALIVE...
...THREE YEARS BACK THIS ROAMER HAD KILLED HIS SON AND HAD ESCAPED GUNPACHI WITH JUST A SCRATCH...
ALL THAT WINTER, GUNPACHI KEPT GOING BACK UP INTO THE ŌU MOUNTAINS IN PURSUIT OF THE HUGE ONE EARED BEAR...
...BUT HE NEVER SAW EVEN A TRACE OF HIM. OLD ONE-EAR HAD SIMPLY DISAPPEARED. SINCE THEN, GUNPACHI HADN'T GONE OUT HUNTING ANYMORE.

GRANDFATHER
I'M SORRY.
FORGIVE ME.
...GOING.
YOU'RE

I HAVE TO FINISH OFF THAT BEAR MYSELF
...
BUT THERE'S NO NEED FOR YOU TO GO ALONE.
WHY DON'T YOU JOIN MASTER NAGAYOSHI AND HIS MEN?
IT'S BETWEEN HIM AND ME.
I BELIEVED HE HAD TO BE BROUGHT UP TO BE A TRUE MATAGI
SO HE COULD FOLLOW IN MY FOOTSTEPS AND MAKE A GOOD HEADMAN
TOKIZŌ...
WAS OUR ONLY SON

I RAISED HIM STRICTLY, ACCORDING TO THE MATAGI TRADITION
HE OBEYED ME, WITH NEVER A WORD OF PROTEST.
THAT'S WHY WE FOUND HIM A WIFE,
BUT, IN FACT, HE NEVER INTENDED TO LEAD A MATAGI'S LIFE.
YOU KNEW THAT TOO, DIDN'T YOU?
EVEN THOUGH HE WAS STILL YOUNG, SO HE WOULDN'T LEAVE.
WHEN ALL IS SAID AND DONE, IT IS MY FAULT TOKIZŌ DIED.
THAT FATEFUL DAY,
THE TWO OF US WERE HUNTING ANTELOPE

WOW WOW WOW
TAKE IT EASY, SHIRO, I'M GOING ALONE
YOU JUST GIVE ME SOME BEAUTIFUL PUPS
AA OOOH
WOW WOW
HRF
WOW
WOW
WOW

HE'S GOT TO GET OVER IT.
EVEN IF HE KILLS THAT BEAST, IT WON'T BRING MY HUSBAND BACK!
TWEE-TWEET
PIP-PIP
WHAT'S HE DOING SUCH A FOOLISH THING FOR?
TWEE-TWEET
PIP-PIP
HE WOULDN'T GO A-HUNTING AGAIN UNTIL HARUHIKO WAS GROWN...
GRANDFATHER PROMISED...
AND WHY ON EARTH IS HE GOING ALONE?!
HE'S ALWAYS BEEN LIKE THAT.
ONCE HIS MIND IS MADE UP, HE DOESN'T LOOK BACK
THERE'S NO STOPPING GRANDFATHER WHEN HE'S GOT HIS HEART SET ON GOING INTO THE MOUNTAINS.
WELL, IT'S DONE.

THE ASAHI PEAK ON MORIYOSHI VOLCANO, WEST OF THE OU RANGE.
HUF
HUF
FOR SEVERAL DAYS GUNPACHI SEARCHED FOR THE ONE-EARED BEAR'S TRACKS.

Whoooo
A BLIZZARD BLEW UP ON THE THIRD DAY.
GUNPACHI HAD STILL FOUND NOTHING.

GRAND-MOTHER!!
COME QUICK!!
SHE'S BOUND TO HAVE GONE LOOKING FOR GRANDFATHER
LOOK, SHE'S GONE!
...
SHIRO !!
SHE'S A MATAGI DOG TO THE CORE ..
EVEN WITH HER BIG BELLY,
AH!
I HOPE NOTHING HAPPENS TO THEM.
LIKE MASTER, LIKE DOG.

SLUSH
HUF
HUF
HUF
DROPPINGS!
HE'S VERY CLOSE!
SNIFF SNIFF
SNF
THAT BEAR...
HE WANTS TO FIGHT!
HE'S LEFT HIS DROPPINGS TO LURE ME...

CLUNKCLUNG
WHOOOOO
GUNPACHI PRAYED TO THE SPIRIT OF THE MOUNTAIN, TO PURIFY HIMSELF AND FOR A GOOD HUNT, ACCORDING TO MATAGI RITUAL.
SNOW UP ON THE HIGH SLOPES, HAIL DOWN BELOW.
NAMU ABURA UNKENSOWAKA
NAMU ABURA UNKENSOWAKA

THE TWO-LEGGED CREATURE WHO WAS FOLLOWING HIM WAS GETTING THE ONE-EARED BEAR ALL RILED UP.
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
THE ONE-EARED BEAR DECIDED TO MAKE A PLAY FOR IT.
THE TWO-LEGGED CREATURE WAS OLD, BUT SLOWLY AND SURELY HE WAS MOVING IN CLOSER.
...OF WALKING BACKWARDS IN HIS OWN PRINTS ND THEN JUMPING OFF TO THE SIDE ND HIDING IN THE BUSHES.
HE PULLED HIS USUAL TRICK...

HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUH?!
HE'S LEAPED FROM HERE

CHUF CHUFF
COME OUT!
YOU CAN'T FOOL ME!!
CHUFF

GRAAAA

BANG
PLOSH
OOMPH
CLUNK
PLONK
KHUNK
GRRR
GRRF
CHIRR
CHIRR

GRRUFF
BANG
RROWR

YEEAAA
YAARH
SLUP
SN
AP

WOK
GRR
RUFF
WOW
WOW
WOW
...!?
GRRR
SHIRO
..!?

THE SEASONED MATAGI DOG KNEW HIS PAW PADS WERE ONE-EAR'S MOST VULNERABLE SPOT.
SHIROO !!
CLUNK
SHE KEPT TEARING AT THEM UNTIL THEY WERE IN TATTERS AND ONE-EAR STARTED TO MOVE MORE SLOWLY.

ARF!
BANG
SPLUT

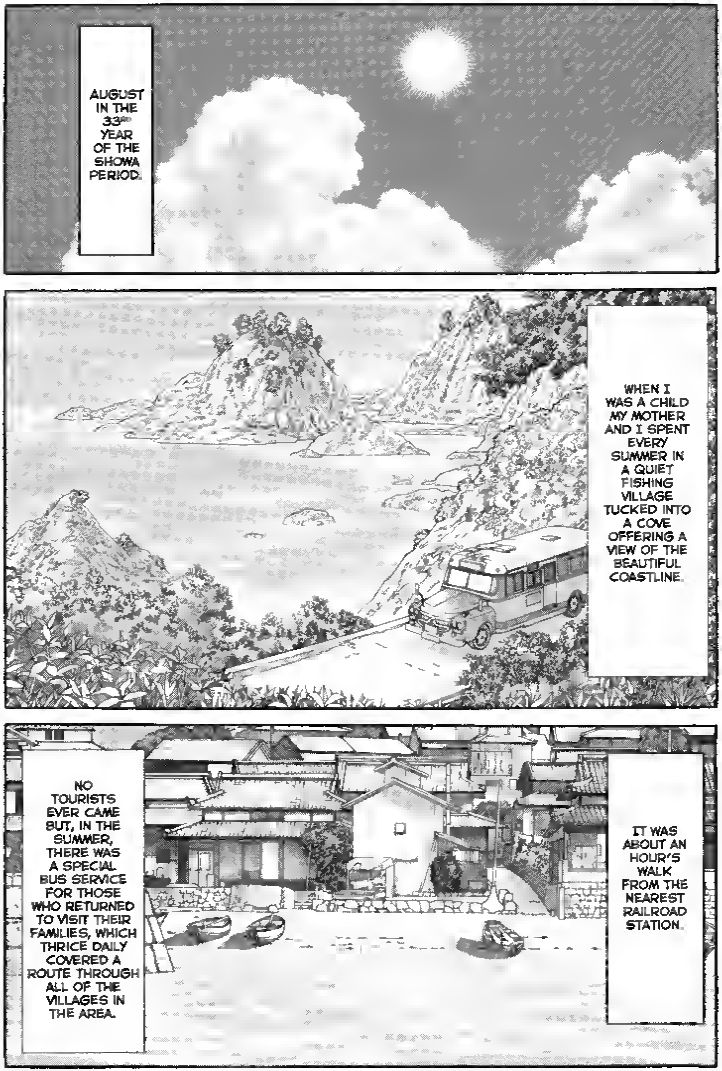
SHIROOO !!
AGH...
AAH...
TROMP
OH MISERY...

WHY? WHY? WHY?
SHIRO, TOO. THROUGH MY FAULT.
WHAT HAVE I DONE?
WHY AM I ALWAYS THE ONLY SURVIVOR?
WHOOOO
WHY...
..DO YOU ALLOW AN OLD MAN LIKE ME TO LIVE ON?
HEAR ME,
SPIRIT OF THE MOUNTAIN. .

OOH!
PULE
PULE
PULE
PULE
AAH!
JUST...
ONE PUP...
SINCE THE DAWN OF TIME IT IS SAID THAT THE BIRTH OF A SINGLE PUP IS A BLESSING THAT HAPPENS BUT ONCE IN A HUNDRED YEARS
YOU HAVE A PRECIOUS PUP!
BE HAPPY!
GOOD FOR YOU, SHIRO!

AH...
SPIRIT OF THE MOUNTAIN, I THANK THEE.
WHOOOO
THE SPIRIT OF THE MOUNTAIN'S CRY ECHOED FROM PEAK TO PEAK.
SUDDENLY A BLIZZARD STARTED BLOWING...
ARE YOU TELLING ME I MUST LIVE?
THAT I MUST CONTINUE TO PROTECT THIS MOUNTAIN...
...AND CARE FOR THIS NEW LIFE?

*THE ISLAND WHERE THE WIND BRINGS THE SEASHELLS

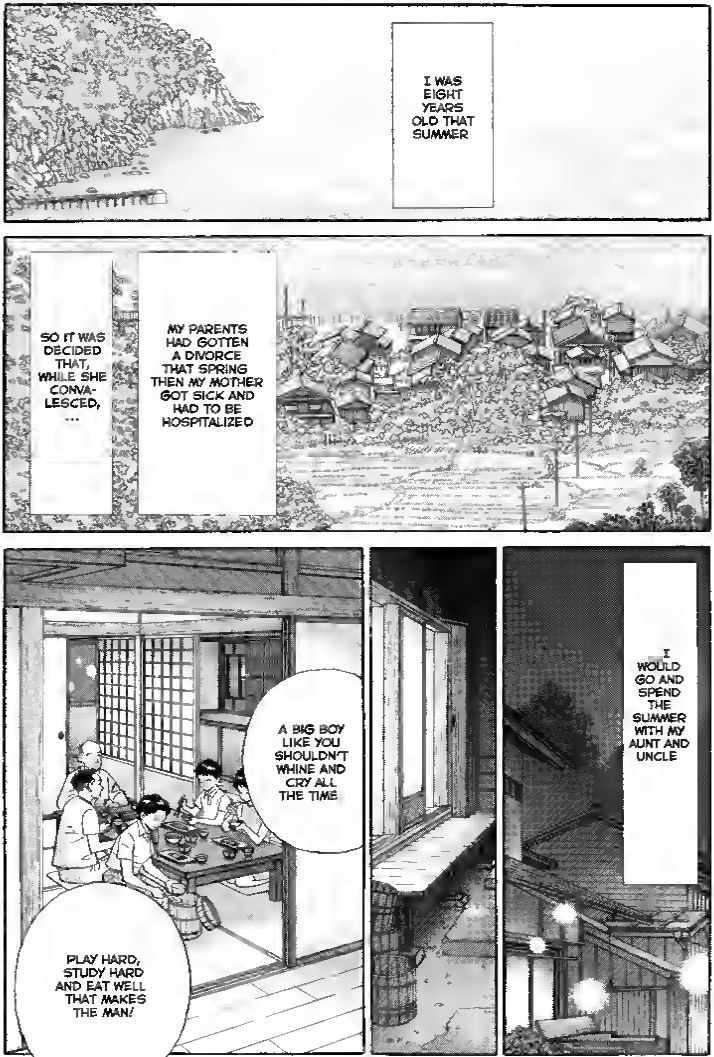

AUGUST IN THE 33RD YEAR OF THE SHOWA PERIOD.
WHEN I WAS A CHILD MY MOTHER AND I SPENT EVERY SUMMER IN A QUIET FISHING VILLAGE TUCKED INTO A COVE OFFERING A VIEW OF THE BEAUTIFUL COASTLINE.
NO TOURISTS EVER CAME BUT, IN THE SUMMER, THERE WAS A SPECIAL BUS SERVICE FOR THOSE WHO RETURNED TO VISIT THEIR FAMILIES, WHICH THRICE DAILY COVERED A ROUTE THROUGH ALL OF THE VILLAGES IN THE AREA.
IT WAS ABOUT AN HOUR'S WALK FROM THE NEAREST RAILROAD STATION.

KOH
IT SURE IS A LONG WAY FROM TOKYO
WELL, TAKASHI,
HERE YOU ARE
MIND, SINCE YOU COME FOR OBON EVERY YEAR, YOU DON'T FORGET, DO YOU?
WELL DONE!!
IT'S THAT WAY...
DO YOU REMEMBER WHERE WE LIVE?
YES.
WELL, YOU DO HAVE TO DO YOUR SUMMER HOMEWORK!
YOU'LL BE ABLE TO PLAY HERE ALL SUMMER!
YOU DON'T USUALLY STAY FOR VERY LONG...
...BUT THIS TIME IT'S DIFFERENT.

(1) OBON IS AN ANNUAL BUDDHIST FESTIVAL OF THE DEAD IT IS BELIEVED THAT EACH YEAR DURING OBON, THE ANCESTORS' SPIRITS RETURN TO THIS WORLD IN ORDER TO VISIT THEIR RELATIVES.

ARE YOU GOING FOR A SWIM WITH THE OTHERS?
HELLO, YAE-CHAN!
HI!
YES
YAE LIVES WITH US NOW.
WELL, I'VE GOT TO GET GOING.
DON'T BE TOO LATE NOW!
YOU'RE TAKASHI, RIGHT?
I'M SURE YOU'VE PLAYED TOGETHER!
THIS IS YAE-CHAN, SHE USED TO LIVE ACROSS THE STREET. REMEMBER?
I REMEMBER YOU!

OHO HO!
LOOK WHO'S HERE!
BOY, IT LOOKS TO ME LIKE YOU'VE GROWN SINCE I LAST SAW YOU!
IT'S A SHAME YOUR MAMA COULDN'T MAKE IT.
SO, TAKASHI...
YOU LOOK OUT OF SORTS D'YOU MISS YOUR MAMA?
OH, MY WORD!
WELL, OF COURSE, GRANDFATHER.
TAKASHI'S IN THIRD GRADE ALREADY.
HOW TIME FLIES!
AH, DON'T CRY NOW, SILLY.
THIS WILL BE YOUR HOME FOR A TIME. YOU CAN HAVE ALL THE FUN YOU WANT
OK?


I WAS EIGHT YEARS OLD THAT SUMMER
SO IT WAS DECIDED THAT, WHILE SHE CONVA-LESCED, ...
MY PARENTS HAD GOTTEN A DIVORCE THAT SPRING THEN MY MOTHER GOT SICK AND HAD TO BE HOSPITALIZED
A BIG BOY LIKE YOU SHOULDN'T WHINE AND CRY ALL THE TIME
PLAY HARD, STUDY HARD AND EAT WELL THAT MAKES THE MAN!
I WOULD GO AND SPEND THE SUMMER WITH MY AUNT AND UNCLE

YES.
AND BY THE TIME YOUR VACATIONS ARE OVER,
YOUR MAMA WILL BE FEELING BETTER AND SHE'LL COME AND GET YOU.
OK?
IN THE MEANTIME,
THINK OF US AS YOUR MOM AND DAD AND MAKE YOURSELF AT HOME!
LOOK, YAE-CHAN IS ALSO
ALMOST LIKE OUR DAUGHTER
YUM
YUM
JUST MAKE LIKE YOU'RE BROTHER AND SISTER AND YOU'LL GET ALONG, OK?
SURE!
YAE, SINCE YOU'RE THE OLDEST,
YOU'VE GOT TO TAKE GOOD CARE OF TAKASHI
CHOMP
CHOMP

HEY, YOU!
IT'S NOT EVEN DEEP HERE!
WHAT'S WITH THE LIFESAVER?
C'MON, WE'LL TEACH YOU HOW TO SWIM.
YEAH
SPLASH
SPLASH
AREN'T YOU TAKASHI, THE ONE WHO'S COME FROM TOKYO?
HEE, HEE! CAN'T YOU SWIM YET?
SAME AS TOSHIO THEN.
YOU'RE IN THIRD GRADE IT SEEMS.

C'MON!
LET'S GO THIS WAY...
NO, I DON'T WANT TO!
HOW CAN YOU BE IN THIRD GRADE AND STILL NOT KNOW HOW TO SWIM?
WHAT D'YOU MEAN?
THEY TOLD ME NOT TO GO IN DEEP
NO, THANKS.
HE LOOKS LIKE HE'S DROWNING
HAHA HAH!
PEUGH!!
HA HA HAH!
SPLASH
SPLASH
PEUGH
LEMME GO!
PEUGH
LET'S GET OUTTA HERE!!
IT'S YAE!!
JUST YOU WAIT!!
SPLAASH
STOP IT!
SHIGE-RUUU!!!
AAH!

SPLA-BAM
YOU SHOULD BE ASHAMED OF YOURSELF, SHIGERU!
PICKING ON SOMEONE WEAKER THAN YOU.
COUGH
PLOOSH
GHAAA
PLOOSH
COUGH
COUGH
COUGH
SORRY.
SO HOW'S THAT, TOSHIO, SATORU?
WE'LL BE FRIENDS.
I'LL TAKE CARE OF YOU!
IF YOU CAN'T GET ALONG,

SSSSSH
SO THAT WAS HOW MY SUMMER BEGAN
I HAD MORE FUN
OOF
SPLASH
SPLASH
DAY BY DAY, AS I BECAME USED TO VILLAGE LIFE,
SOMETIMES, I EVEN FORGOT ABOUT MY MOTHER

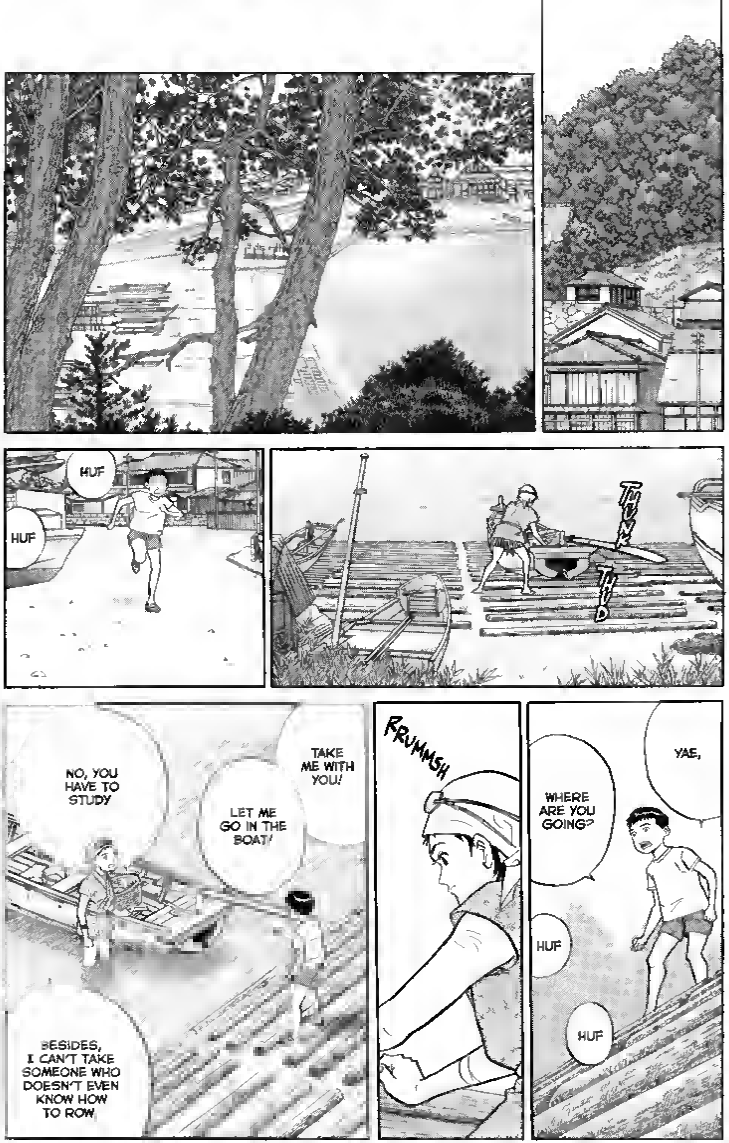
(1) 1958 CHILDREN'S TV FILM SERIES WITH A MASKED HERO

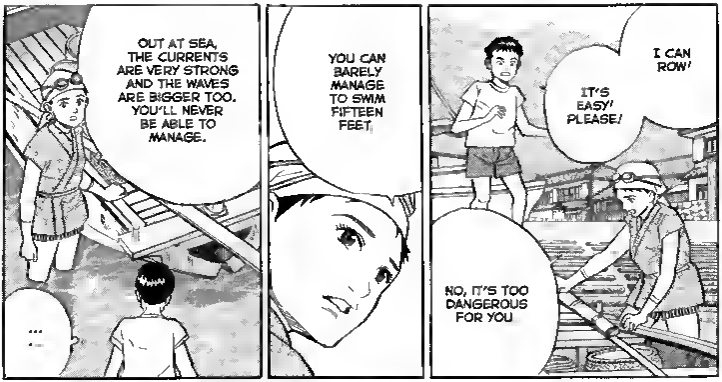
EEYAY!
SPLOOSH
PEEF
I HAD ALWAYS BEEN A SICKLY BOY, COMING DOWN WITH FEVERS ALL THE TIME
BUT THAT SUMMER, AS I PLAYED IN THE SUN DOWN BY THE SEA,
I QUICKLY TURNED AS BROWN AND BECAME AS STRONG AS ANY OF THE VILLAGE BOYS.

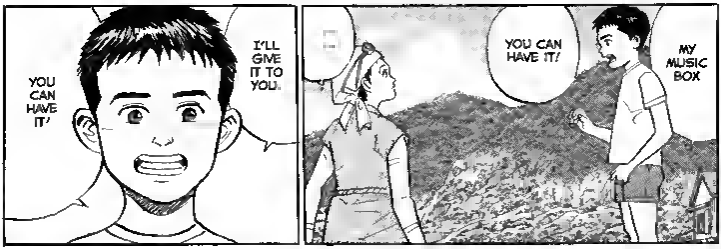
SO,
WHAT'S GOING ON?
AREN'T YOU GOING DOWN TO THE SEASIDE TODAY?
SHE'S GOING TO HIGH SCHOOL NEXT YEAR.
YAE SHOULD FOLLOW YOUR EXAMPLE.
WELL,
YOU CERTAINLY ARE CONSCIEN-TIOUS!
AND I'VE ALSO GOT TO START WORKING ON MY ILLUSTRATED SUMMER DIARY.
NO, I'VE GOT HOME WORK
ALL OF A SUDDEN, I REMEM-BERED MY MOTHER
TAKASHI,
YOU HAVE TO STUDY HARD TO HELP YOUR MOTHER.
...

TING
TING-TING-KLING
TO
K
TAKASHI, HERE,
THIS IS FOR YOU.
IF YOU EVER GET HOMESICK, THIS WILL REMIND YOU THAT...
...YOUR MAMA IS ALWAYS WITH YOU.
TINKLE-TING
TING-TING-LING

(1) *MODLITWA DZIEWICY* BY TEKLA BADARZEWSKA-BARANOWSKA

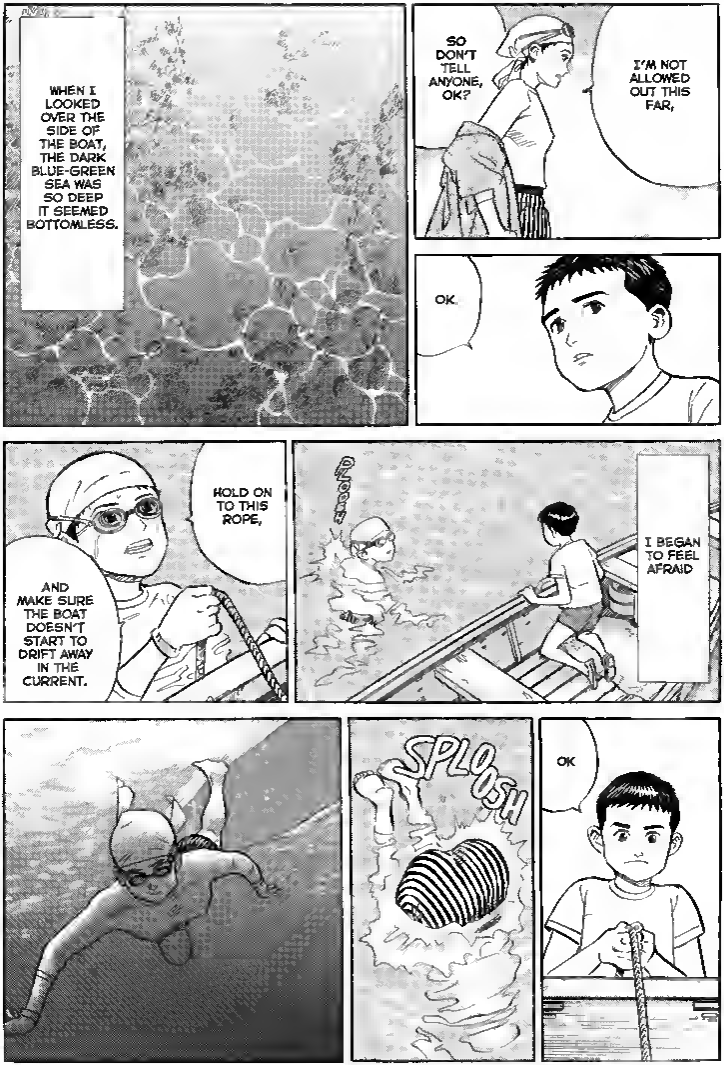

HUF
HUF
THUNK
THUD
NO, YOU HAVE TO STUDY
TAKE ME WITH YOU!
LET ME GO IN THE BOAT!
BESIDES, I CAN'T TAKE SOMEONE WHO DOESN'T EVEN KNOW HOW TO ROW
RRUMMSH
YAE,
WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
HUF
HUF

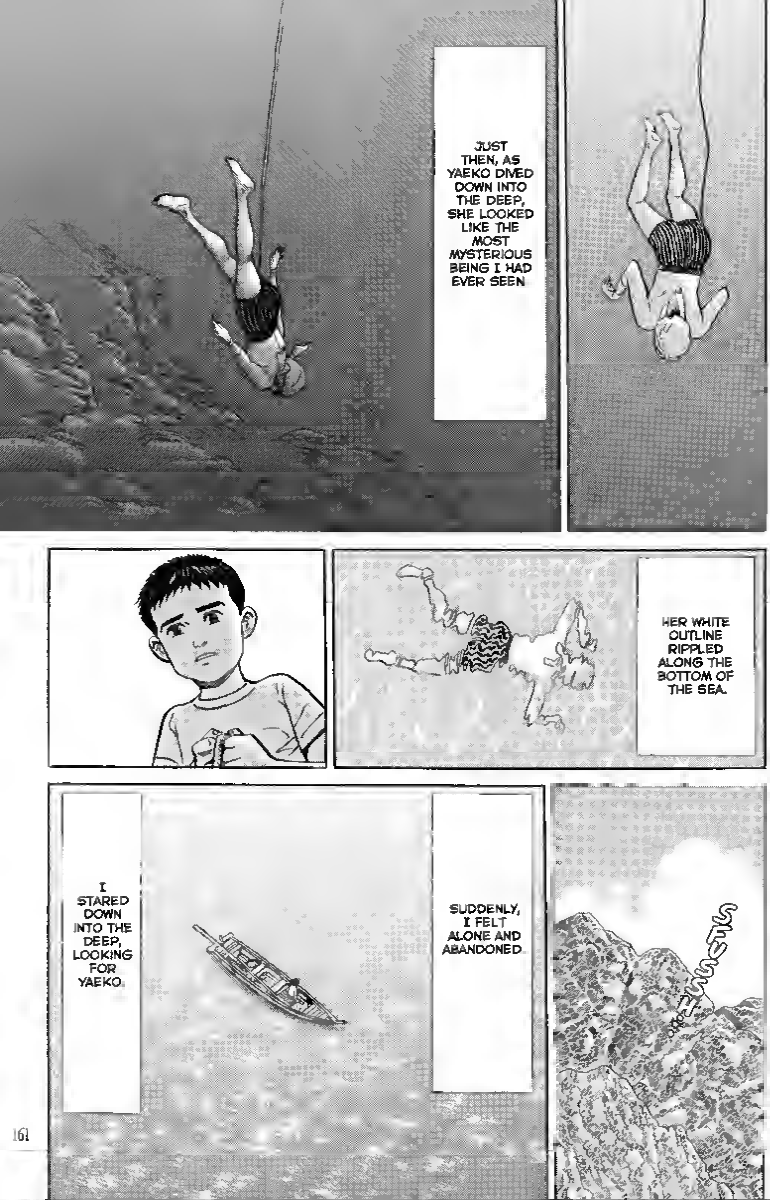

OUT AT SEA, THE CURRENTS ARE VERY STRONG AND THE WAVES ARE BIGGER TOO. YOU'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO MANAGE.
...
YOU CAN BARELY MANAGE TO SWIM FIFTEEN FEET.
I CAN ROW!
IT'S EASY! PLEASE!
NO, IT'S TOO DANGEROUS FOR YOU.


YOU CAN HAVE IT!
I'LL GIVE IT TO YOU.
YOU CAN HAVE IT!
MY MUSIC BOX

ALL RIGHT,
BUT DON'T COME BEGGING FOR IT BACK AFTERWARDS.
YOU CAN HAVE IT!
YOUR MAMA'S MUSIC BOX?
BUT ISN'T IT...

WE CAN NO LONGER SEE THE VILLAGE.
WE'RE OUT FAR ENOUGH.
IT'S HERE...
FWUUUSH

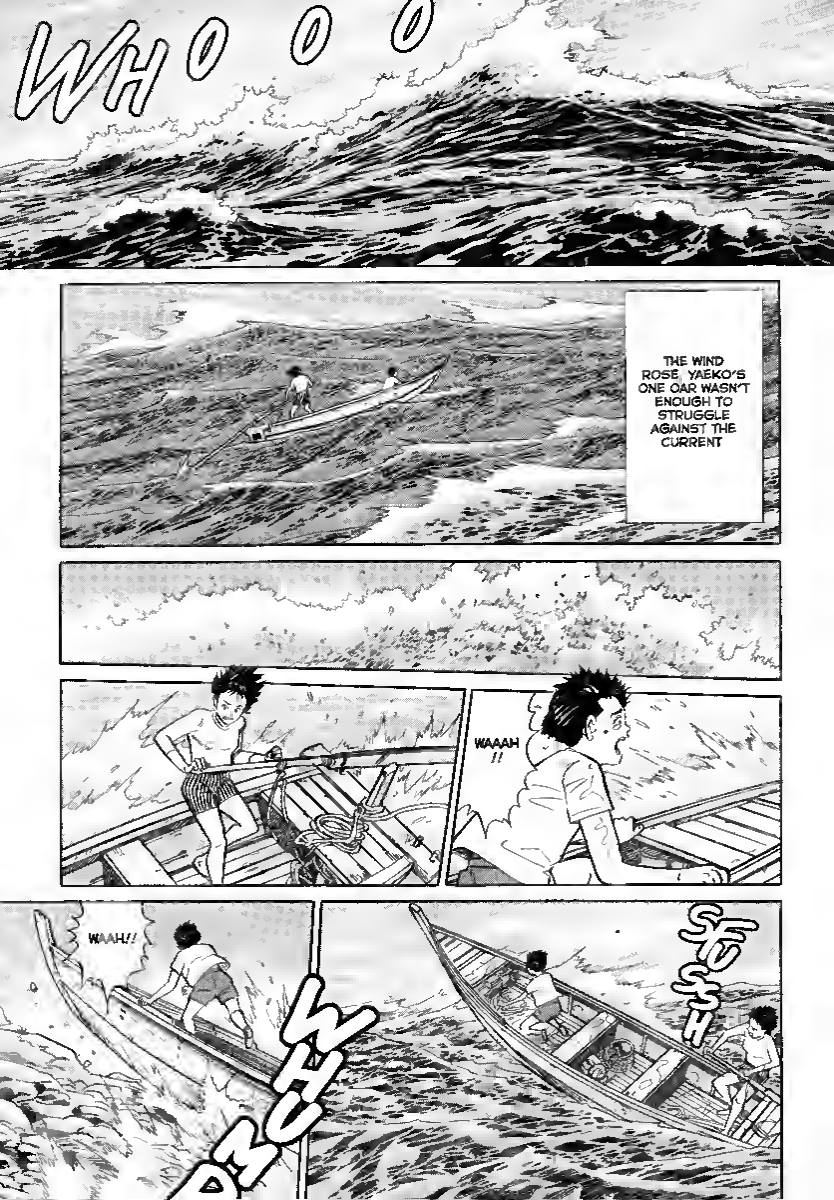

WHEN I LOOKED OVER THE SIDE OF THE BOAT, THE DARK BLUE-GREEN SEA WAS SO DEEP IT SEEMED BOTTOMLESS.
SO DON'T TELL ANYONE, OK?
I'M NOT ALLOWED OUT THIS FAR,
OK.
HOLD ON TO THIS ROPE,
AND MAKE SURE THE BOAT DOESN'T START TO DRIFT AWAY IN THE CURRENT.
SPLOOSH
I BEGAN TO FEEL AFRAID
SPLOOSH
OK


JUST THEN, AS YAEKO DIVED DOWN INTO THE DEEP, SHE LOOKED LIKE THE MOST MYSTERIOUS BEING I HAD EVER SEEN.
HER WHITE OUTLINE RIPPLED ALONG THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA.
I STARED DOWN INTO THE DEEP, LOOKING FOR YAEKO.
SUDDENLY, I FELT ALONE AND ABANDONED.
SPLASH

THUNK
SPLYSH
WOW!
AN ABALONE!
THAT'S REALLY NEAT!
PEUGH
YAE!
AAHFF!
AGAIN SHE TOOK A DEEP BREATH AND, GIVING THE BOAT A KICK, DIVED BACK DOWN
PLOOSH
YAEKO DIVED AGAIN AND AGAIN

...AND THE ROCKING WAS STARTING TO MAKE ME SICK.
THE WAVES WERE GETTING BIGGER.
I SAT IN THE BOAT WAITING, WITH NOTHING TO DO I WAS BORED.
HEY,
CAN WE GO BACK NOW? I FEEL SICK.
UMPH
DOOSH
SLUMP
SLUMP
WE'RE DRIFTING OUT!
THE SEA IS GETTING ROUGHER!
OH...
GOOD-NESS!

THE CURRENT DRAGGED THE LITTLE BOAT OUT TO SEA LIKE A TOY.
WITHOUT WARNING, THE SEA BECAME VERY ROUGH.
SPLASH
TAKASHI!!
YOU'RE A MAN! STOP BLUBBERING!!
WAAH!
OOO!
GET A GRIP!! OR YOU'LL FALL IN!

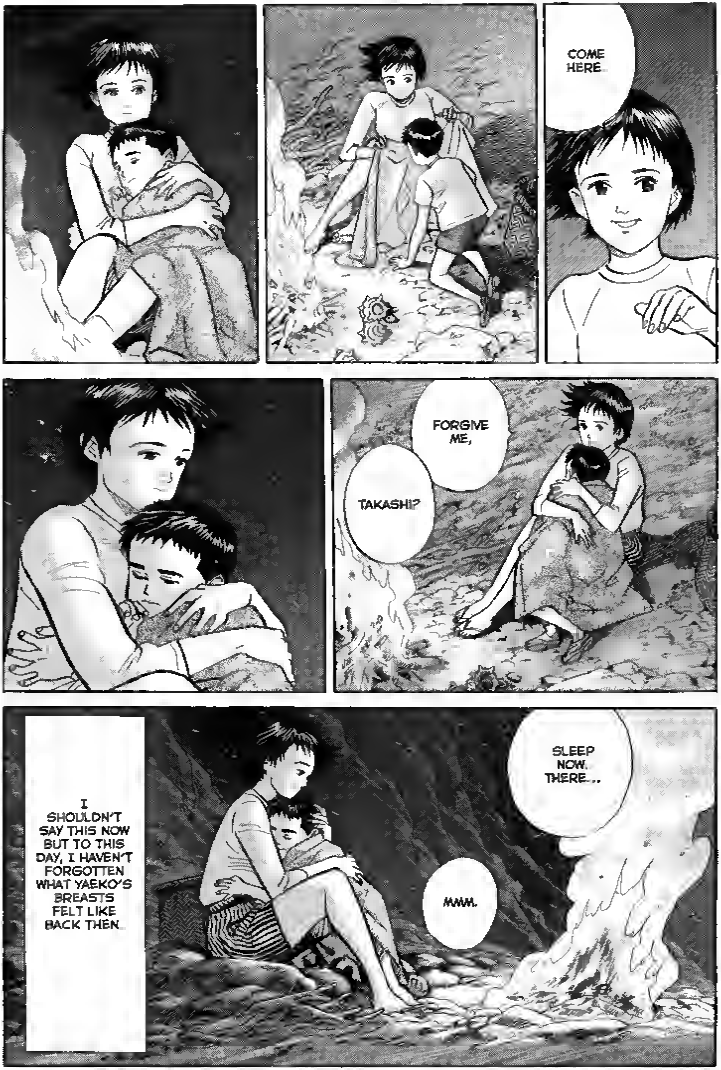

WHOOO
THE WIND ROSE. YAEKO'S ONE OAR WASN'T ENOUGH TO STRUGGLE AGAINST THE CURRENT
WAAAH !!
WAAH!!
WHUMM
SWISH!!

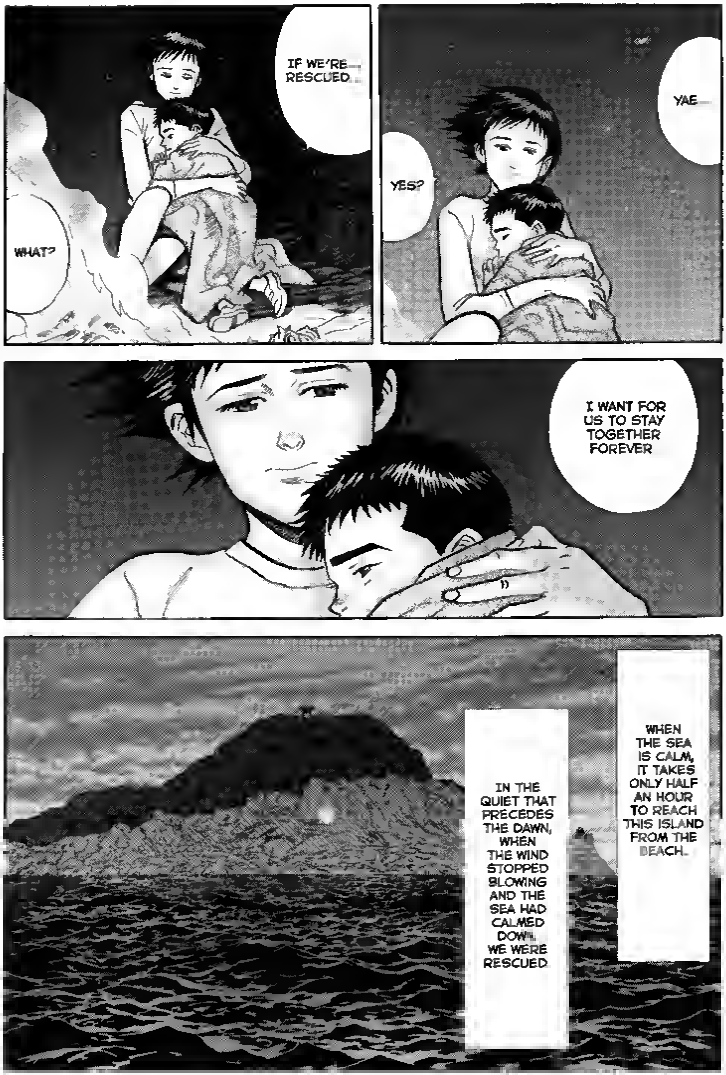
WHOOOOOOO
ARE YOU HURT, TAKASHI?
NO.
...
ARE WE?
WHERE ...
WAIT,
YAE!
YAE,
WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
I'M GOING TO HAVE A LOOK ON THE OTHER SIDE. SEE IF WE CAN SHELTER FROM THE WIND.
IT COULD BE KAIYOSE-JIMA.

HEY,
LET'S GO BACK
NO.
IF WE GO OUT TO SEA NOW, THE CURRENT WILL DRAG US OUT INTO THE OPEN
HUF
YAE!
HUF
IT'S HERE!
IT IS KAIYOSE-JIMA! WE'RE SAVED!
STOP CRYING OVER A THING LIKE THIS!
IT'S NOT THE END OF THE WORLD. WHEN THE SEA CALMS DOWN, WE'LL BE ABLE TO GO BACK.
SNIFF
WE'RE BETTER OFF STAYING HERE.
IN THE VILLAGE THEY KNOW THAT.
SO DON'T WORRY
SHOOOOO
THIS IS KAIYOSE-JIMA.
ALL OF THE BOATS WHICH GET DRAGGED BY THE CURRENT END UP ON THIS ISLAND.
IN THE SAME WAY THE WAVES TOSS SEASHELLS ONTO THE BEACH.

I'VE HEARD SAY THAT, BEFORE GOING OUT TO FISH ON THE HIGH SEAS, THE FISHERMEN COME SAY A PRAYER HERE.
THEY SAY THAT THE SPIRIT WHO PROTECTS OUR VILLAGE LIVES HERE ON THIS ISLAND
HE WILL SAVE US
THE HORNED TURBANS ARE REALLY GOOD.
CHUNK
CHUNK
I OWE THEM FOR ALL THEY'VE DONE FOR ME
YES, THEY MIGHT BE ABLE TO SEE OUR FIRE FROM THERE.
AUNTY AND UNCLE..
WE MUST'VE BEEN HUNGRY, EH?
YOU LOOK MORE CHEERFUL AT LEAST
EVERYONE MUST BE WORRIED ABOUT US, RIGHT?

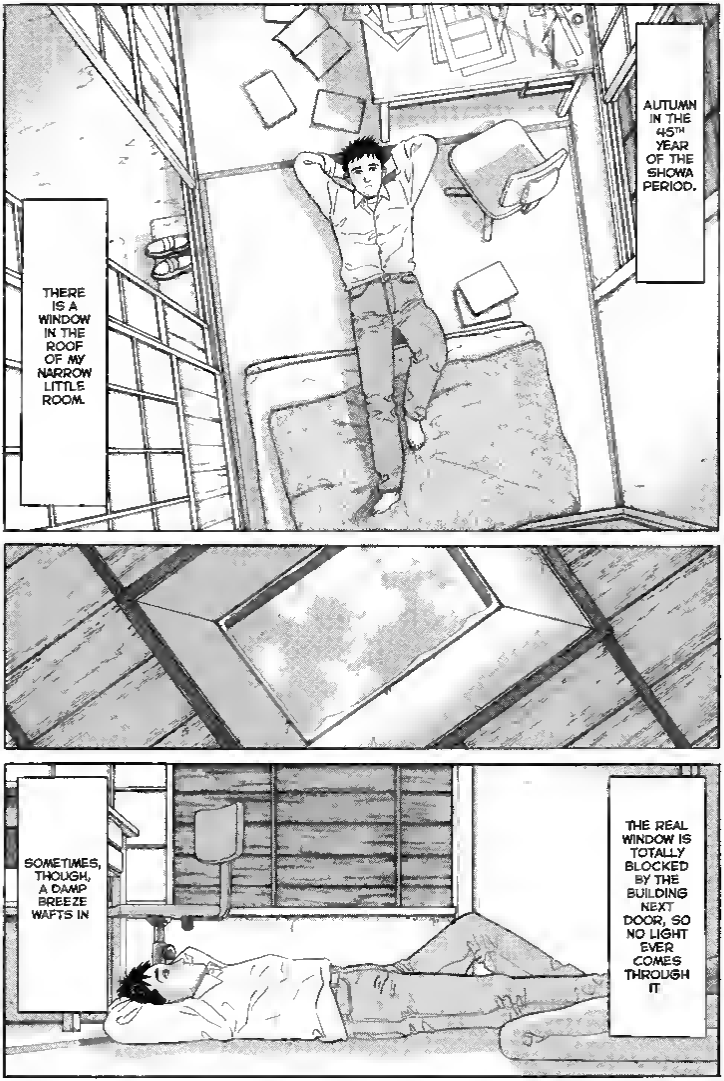
MY PARENTS...
DIED AT SEA.
...
WHEN I WAS ORPHANED,
YOUR AUNT AND UNCLE TOOK ME IN
THEY'VE BEEN NICE TO ME, TREATING ME LIKE I WAS REALLY THEIR DAUGHTER.
THAT'S WHY I WANT TO GROW UP FAST AND GO DIVING.
I'LL GATHER LOTS OF SHELLFISH SO I CAN REPAY THEM.
I'M COLD
SLUUUUSH

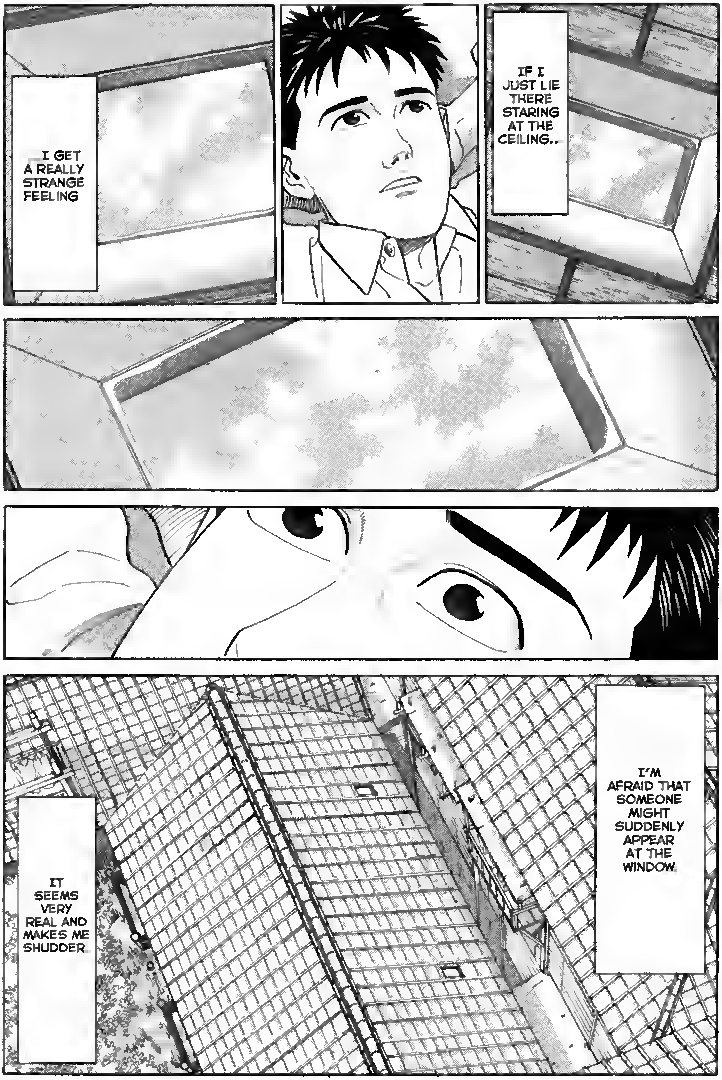

COME HERE.
FORGIVE ME,
TAKASHI?
I SHOULDN'T SAY THIS NOW BUT TO THIS DAY, I HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN WHAT YASKO'S BREASTS FELT LIKE BACK THEN.
SLEEP NOW. THERE...
MMM.

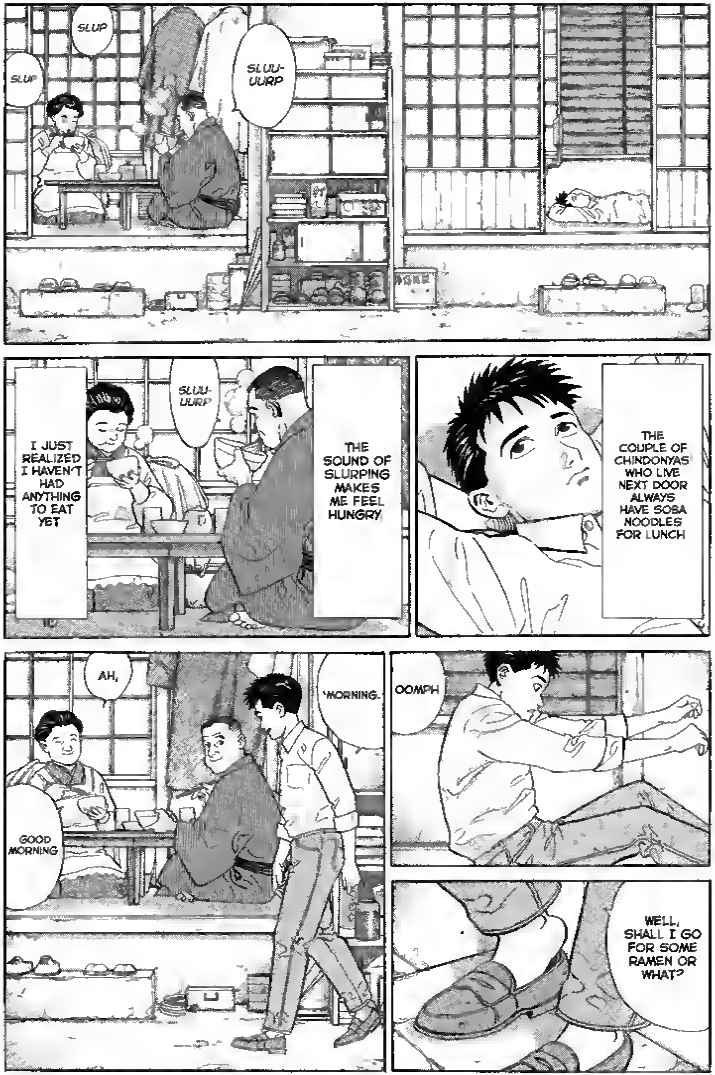

IF WE'RE RESCUED...
WHAT?
YAE...
YES?
I WANT FOR US TO STAY TOGETHER FOREVER
WHEN THE SEA IS CALM, IT TAKES ONLY HALF AN HOUR TO REACH THIS ISLAND FROM THE BEACH.
IN THE QUIET THAT PRECEDES THE DAWN, WHEN THE WIND STOPPED BLOWING AND THE SEA HAD CALMED DOWN, WE WERE RESCUED

THAT WAS SEVERAL DECADES AGO. I RETURNED TO THE VILLAGE ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF MY UNCLE'S DEATH, AND TOGETHER WITH MY WIFE, WENT TO KAIYOSE-JIMA.
WHY DO WE HAVE TO COME BACK TO THIS PLACE AGAIN?...
BOY, YOU SURE GET SOME STRANGE IDEAS.
IT ALL HAPPENED SUCH A LONG TIME AGO... DID YOU REALLY SAY SUCH A ROMANTIC THING TO ME?
I HAVE ABSOLUTELY NO RECOLLECTION WHATSOEVER

SHÔKARÔ


AUTUMN IN THE 45TH YEAR OF THE SHOWA PERIOD.
THERE IS A WINDOW IN THE ROOF OF MY NARROW LITTLE ROOM.
THE REAL WINDOW IS TOTALLY BLOCKED BY THE BUILDING NEXT DOOR, SO NO LIGHT EVER COMES THROUGH IT.
SOMETIMES, THOUGH, A DAMP BREEZE WAFTS IN


I GET A REALLY STRANGE FEELING
IF I JUST LIE THERE STARING AT THE CEILING..
I'M AFRAID THAT SOMEONE MIGHT SUDDENLY APPEAR AT THE WINDOW.
IT SEEMS VERY REAL AND MAKES ME SHUDDER.

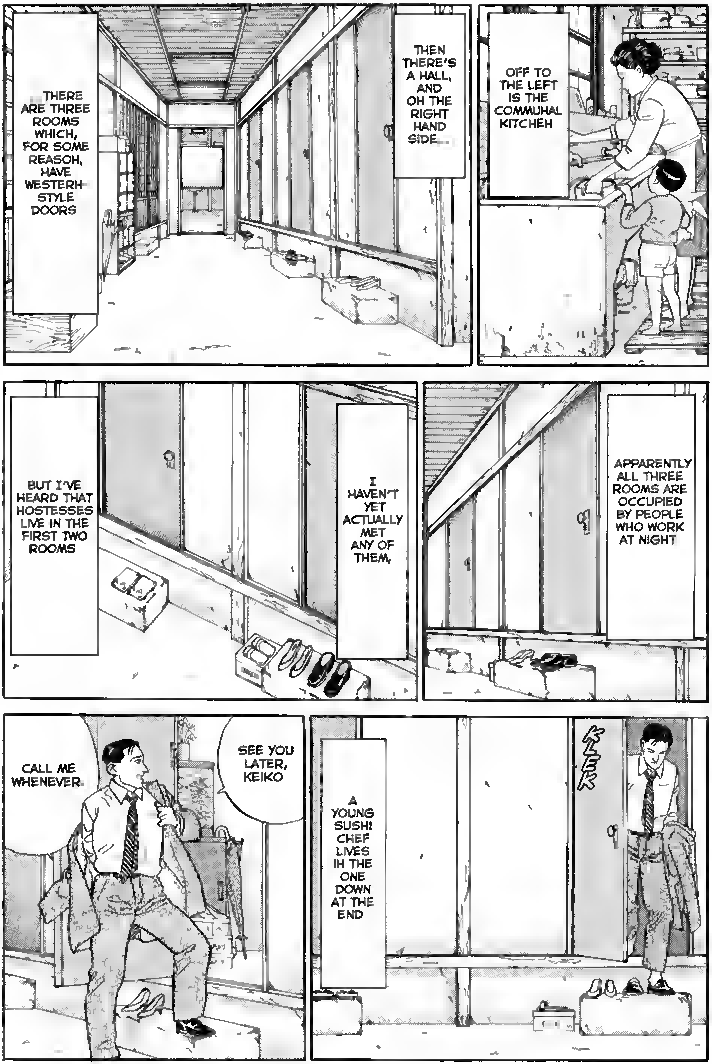

SLUP
SLUP
SLUU-UURP
SLUU-UURP
I JUST REALIZED I HAVEN'T HAD ANYTHING TO EAT YET
THE SOUND OF SLURPING MAKES ME FEEL HUNGRY
THE COUPLE OF CHINDONYAS WHO LIVE NEXT DOOR ALWAYS HAVE SOBA NOODLES FOR LUNCH
AH,
GOOD MORNING
'MORNING.
OOMPH
WELL, SHALL I GO FOR SOME RAMEN OR WHAT?

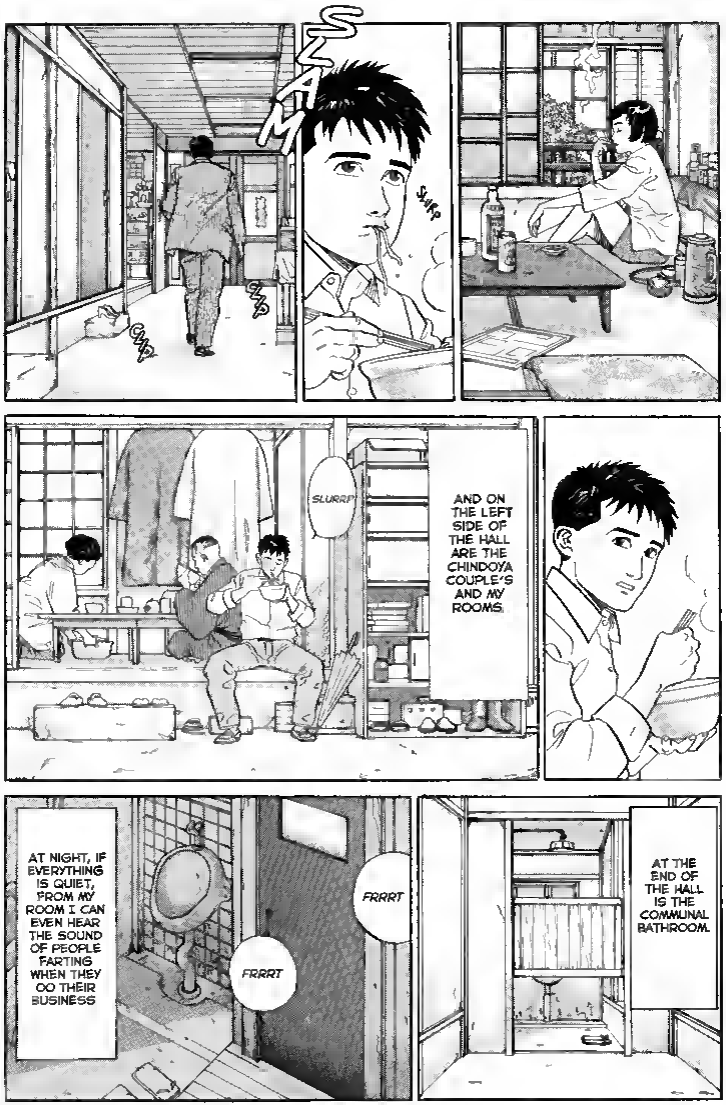
(1) STREET PERFORMERS THAT ADVERTISE FOR COMMERCIAL ESTABLISHMENTS

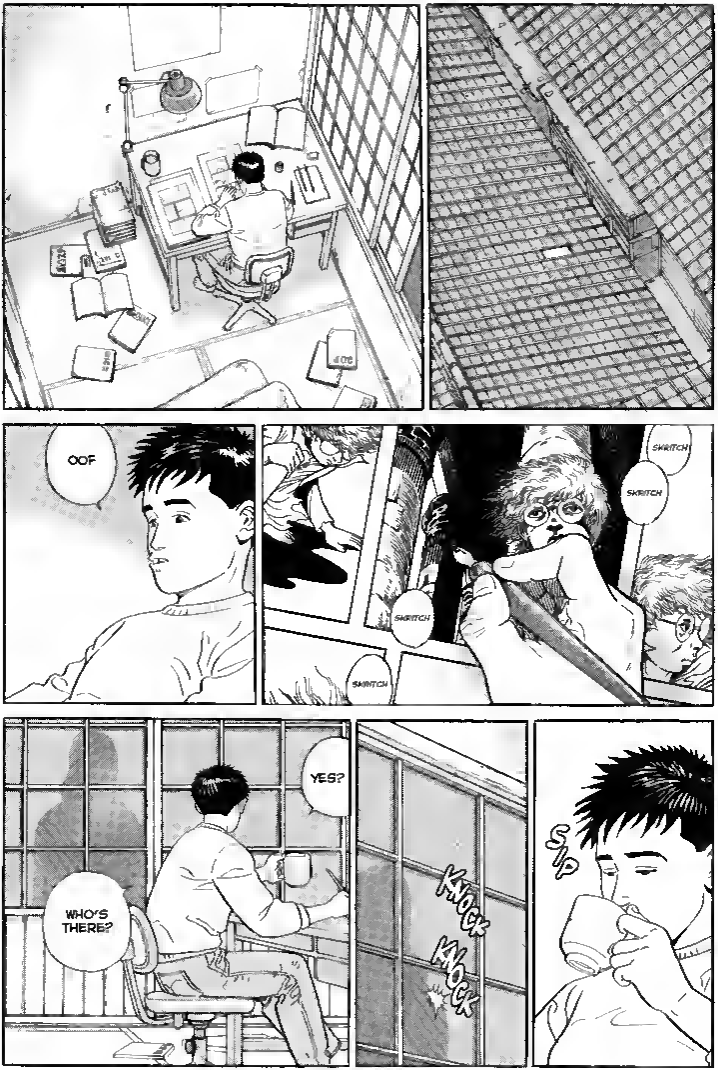
NO
HAVE YOU HAD LUNCH YET?
HUH?
WAIT A MINUTE.
HEY,
RIGHT AWAY.
SET ANOTHER BOWL OUT.
OK,
WELL
WOULD YOU LIKE TO HAVE SOME WITH US?
DO YOU HAVE TO GO TO WORK LATER?
NO. I JUST FINISHED A JOB YESTERDAY SO I HAVE THREE DAYS OFF.
EXCUSE ME
THANKS VERY MUCH.

BUT IF YOU KEEP AT IT,
FOR NOW I JUST HELP OUT.
YEAH, BUT...
YOU'LL BECOME A MASTER TOO SOME DAY, WON'T YOU?
BUT I THINK IT'S GREAT IF YOU CAN DO SOME THING YOU REALLY LIKE
I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT A MANGAKA'S JOB IS LIKE...
SLURP
THAT YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE THEIR DREAMS.
IT'S GREAT
BAH,
IF YOU WORK HARD ENOUGH, YOU CAN DO ANYTHING
SLU-UURP
I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHETHER I'LL EVER BE A REAL MANGAKA
POOF, I STILL HAVE A LONG WAYS TO GO.
MANING MONEY'S NOT A BAD THING, BUT THE BEST THING IS TO DO WHAT ONE LOVES.
IT'S THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IN LIFE, YOUNG MAN!
SLUP SLUP
WHEN I WAS YOUNG, I LOVED THE THEATER,
AND I WAS AN ACTOR WITH A TRAVELING COMPANY.

SHŌKARŌ, "THE HOUSE OF THE PINE FLOWERS", THE BUILDING WHERE I LIVE, WAS FORMERLY A BROTHEL.
THAT'S WHY ALL THE ROOMS ARE LAID OUT IN SUCH A STRANGE WAY.
WHEN YOU GO THROUGH THE FOYER,
YOU SEE A RECESSED ROOM ON THE RIGHT.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT'S LAYOUT IS LIKE,
GO OUTSIDE AND PLAY!
BUT THERE'S A FAMILY OF THREE LIVING THERE, A MOTHER, HER SON AND AN OLD WOMAN WHO SEEMS TO BE THE GRAND-MOTHER


THERE ARE THREE ROOMS WHICH, FOR SOME REASON, HAVE WESTERN-STYLE DOORS
THEN THERE'S A HALL, AND OH THE RIGHT HAND SIDE...
OFF TO THE LEFT IS THE COMMUNAL KITCHEN
BUT I'VE HEARD THAT HOSTESSES LIVE IN THE FIRST TWO ROOMS
I HAVEN'T YET ACTUALLY MET ANY OF THEM,
APPARENTLY ALL THREE ROOMS ARE OCCUPIED BY PEOPLE WHO WORK AT NIGHT
CALL ME WHENEVER.
SEE YOU LATER, KEIKO
A YOUNG SUSHI CHEF LIVES IN THE ONE DOWN AT THE END
KEK


SLURP
CLOP
CLOP
SLURP
AND ON THE LEFT SIDE OF THE HALL ARE THE CHINDOYA COUPLE'S AND MY ROOMS.
SLURP
AT NIGHT, IF EVERYTHING IS QUIET, FROM MY ROOM I CAN EVEN HEAR THE SOUND OF PEOPLE FARTING WHEN THEY DO THEIR BUSINESS
FRRRT
FRRRT
AT THE END OF THE HALL IS THE COMMUNAL BATHROOM.


OOF
SKRITCH
SKRITCH
SKRITCH
SKRITCH
YES?
WHO'S THERE?
KNOCK KNOCK
SIP

ARE YOU BUSY?
AM I BOTHERING YOU?
GOOD EVENING
WHIRR
TWO A.M., I WAS STARTLED BY AN UNEXPECTED VISITOR.
OH
SINCE I HADN'T YET STOPPED BY TO INTRODUCE MYSELF...
IS IT TRUE YOU DRAW MANGA?
THIS MIDDLE AGED WOMAN TELLS ME SHE'S BEEN LIVING FOR A FORTNIGHT NOW IN THE ROOM WITH A WESTERN-STYLE DOOR CLOSEST TO THE ENTRANCE.
I WORK LATE SO I HAVE THESE UNGODLY HOURS.

EXCUSE ME
ER...
SURE, C'MON IN
COULD I SEE SOME?
OH, DO YOU DRAW WITH THIS PEN?
WHAT BEAUTIFUL LINES, MY WORD!
VERY NICE
WOW,
HER BREATH SMELLED OF ALCOHOL. SHE DOESN'T SEEM DRUNK BUT SHE MUST HAVE HAD QUITE A BIT TO DRINK.
HUH?
IT'S NOT SURE YET.
UH, NO, NO
I'M GOING TO BUY IT.
WHAT MAGAZINE DO YOU WORK FOR?

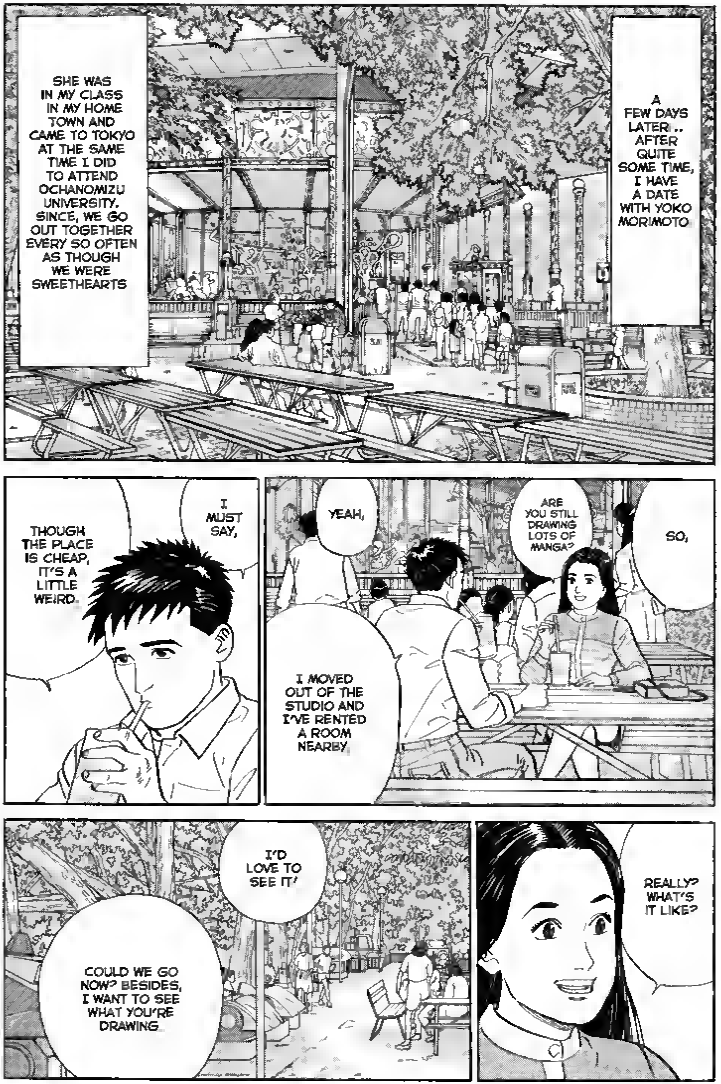
OH, DEAR...
I DON'T KNOW YET WHETHER ANY MAGAZINE WILL PUBLISH IT.
WELL IT LOOKS VERY WELL DRAWN...
THIS IS FOR A CONTEST
HOW LUCKY TO HAVE SUCH TALENT...
WELL,
I JUST LIKE TO DRAW.
I'M SORRY.
ER...
UM...

HE WAS ALWAYS SKETCHING.
MY BROTHER ALWAYS SAID HE WANTED TO DRAW.
LIKE YOU NOW....
...
I DIDN'T MEAN TO,
IT'S JUST THAT IT REMINDED ME OF MY LATE BROTHER....
...BUT HE DIED...AT 16....
...IN OUR VILLAGE HE DROWNED AT SEA.
SO IT WAS LIKE YOU WERE ONE OF THE FAMILY...
IT'S JUST THAT I'D HEARD THAT YOU DREW
I'M REALLY VERY SORRY.
MY WORD,
I DON'T KNOW WHY I'M BORING YOU WITH ALL THIS.
...
...

SOMETIMES, WHEN I'M ALL ALONE THERE, I FEEL OVER WHELMED
MY ROOM'S NEVER BEEN FIXED UP
REALLY?
ARE YOU COMFORTABLE, LIVING IN THIS ROOM?
YES, UM, IT'S QUIET SO IT'S OKAY FOR WORKING
CLICK CLICK
FFFF
I DON'T KNOW WHY,
BUT AT TIMES I SUDDENLY FEEL VERY ALONE
I STAY STILL, LIKE I'M EXPECTING SOMEONE
YES

AFTER SHE LEAVES, MY ROOM SMELLS LIKE CHEAP MAKE-UP AND I FEEL FROZEN, AS THOUGH I HAD JUST BEEN ABANDONED.
THAT NIGHT I OBSESS ABOUT THE SKYLIGHT.
AS I LIE THERE DOZING, UNABLE TO SLEEP...

MMPH...
AAAGH!!


SHE WAS IN MY CLASS IN MY HOME TOWN AND CAME TO TOKYO AT THE SAME TIME I DID TO ATTEND OCHANOMIZU UNIVERSITY. SINCE, WE GO OUT TOGETHER EVERY SO OFTEN AS THOUGH WE WERE SWEETHEARTS
A FEW DAYS LATER... AFTER QUITE SOME TIME, I HAVE A DATE WITH YOKO MORIMOTO.
THOUGH THE PLACE IS CHEAP, IT'S A LITTLE WEIRD.
I MUST SAY,
YEAH,
I MOVED OUT OF THE STUDIO AND I'VE RENTED A ROOM NEARBY.
ARE YOU STILL DRAWING LOTS OF MANGA?
SO,
COULD WE GO NOW? BESIDES, I WANT TO SEE WHAT YOU'RE DRAWING.
I'D LOVE TO SEE IT!
REALLY? WHAT'S IT LIKE?

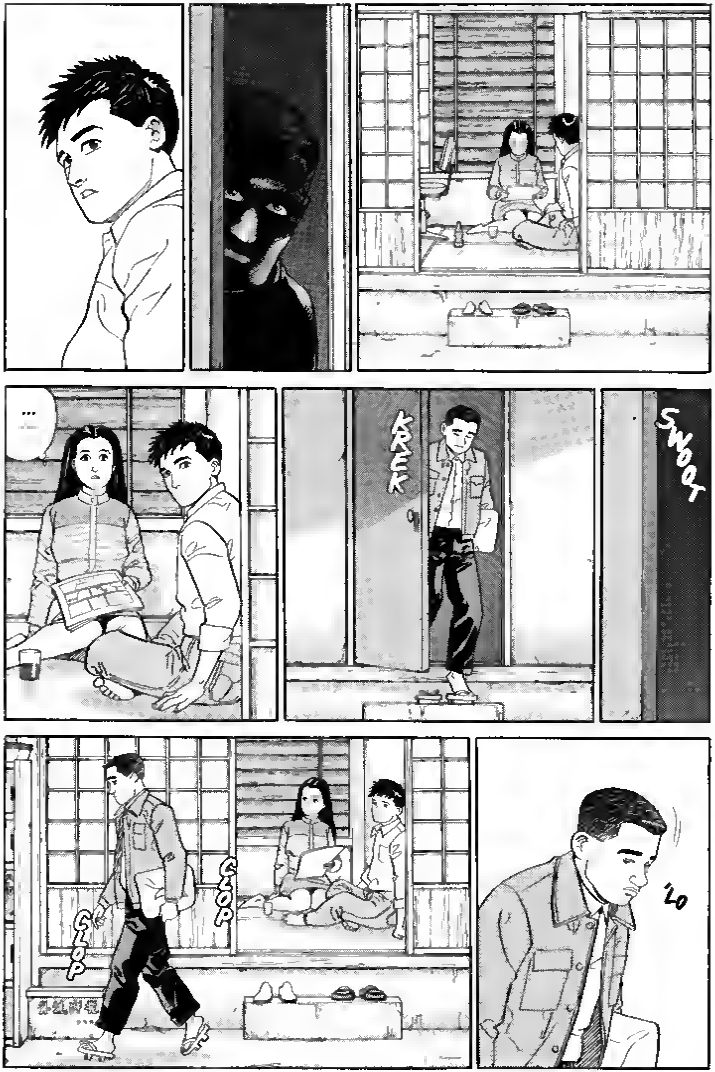
SHÔ-KARÔ?
YEAH
EVEN THE NAME'S WEIRD, ISN'T IT?
DON'T MENTION IT
THANKS FOR BEING SO KIND THE OTHER DAY,
AND FORGIVE ME
HELLO.
AH!
WHO'S THAT? DID YOU SEE HER MAKE-UP?
SHUSH, DON'T TALK LIKE THAT
AND WHAT'S WITH THE FAMILIARITY?
CLOP
CLOP

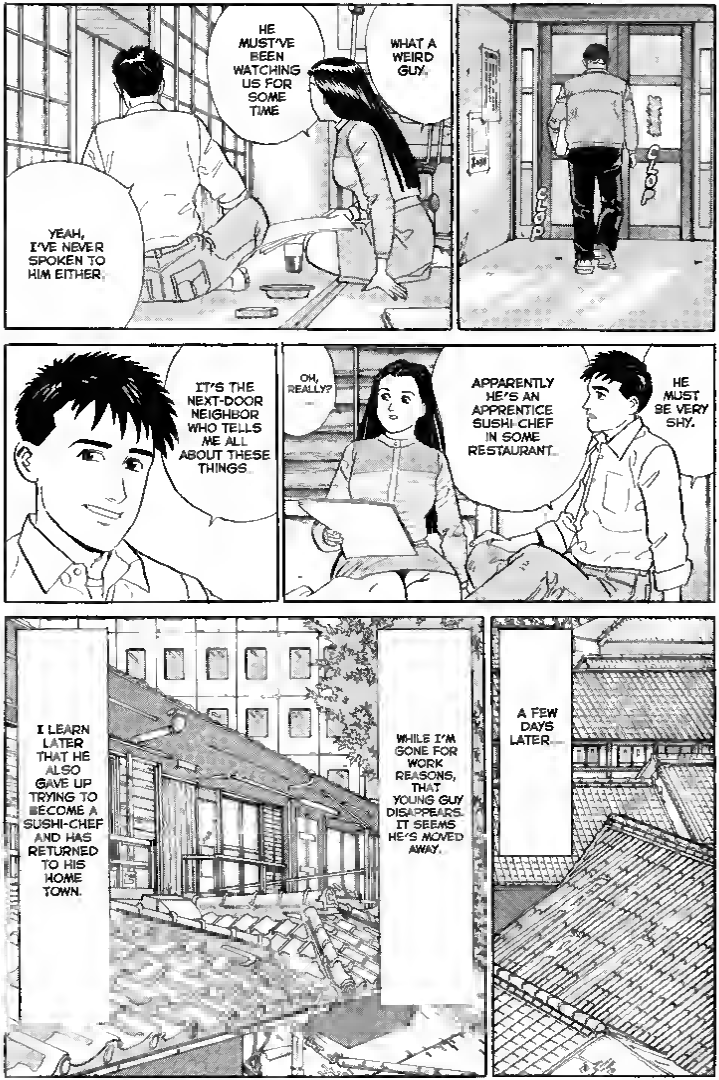
HELLO.
I JUST GOT BACK
IS THAT YOUR GIRLFRIEND?
OH, HELLO THERE
HI!
ARE YOU OFF TO WORK?
STOP BY LATER!
HEY, YOU!
THAT'S ENOUGH!
WE CAN HAVE TEA TOGETHER!
GOOD-LOOKING, EH?
HEHE HEH...
WHIRR
SHUSHHH
OOHOO! INTERES-TING.
IT'S FULL OF ODDBALLS HERE

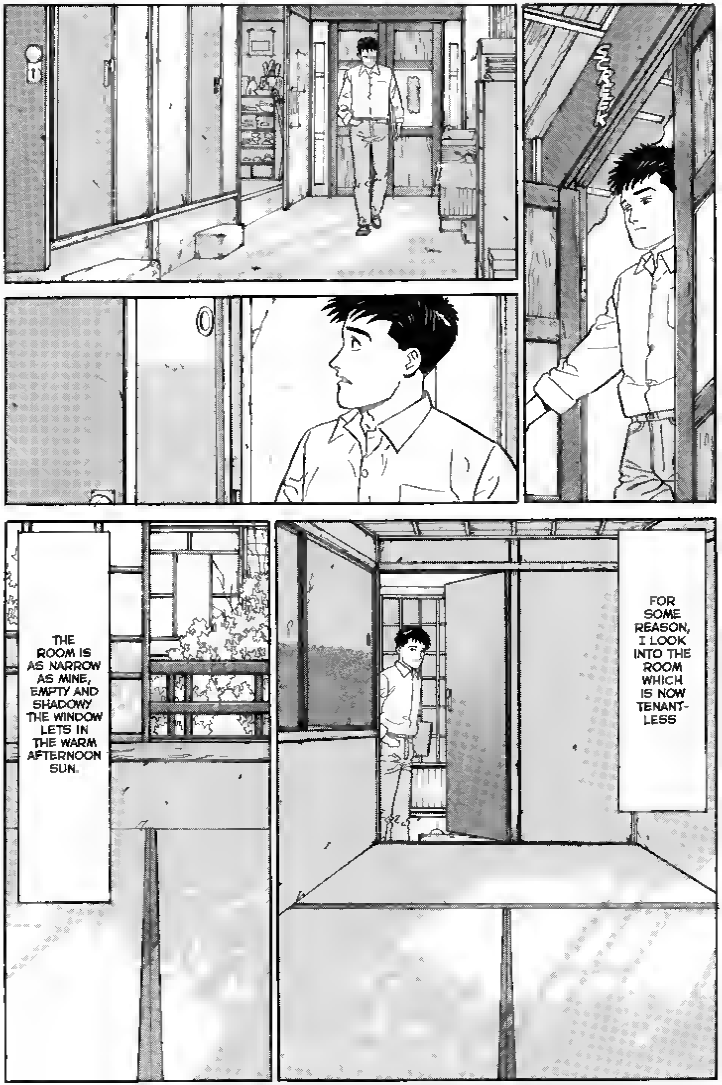
(1) TITLE OF A MANGA BY SEIICHI HAYASHI, WHICH TOLD THE STORY OF A POOR BOY WHO WANTED TO BE A MANGAKA. IT WAS ALSO A SONG BY MORIO OGATA AND HIDEAKI YASO WHICH WAS A HIT IN 1972 AND FROM WHICH A HIT FILM WAS MADE IN 1975.

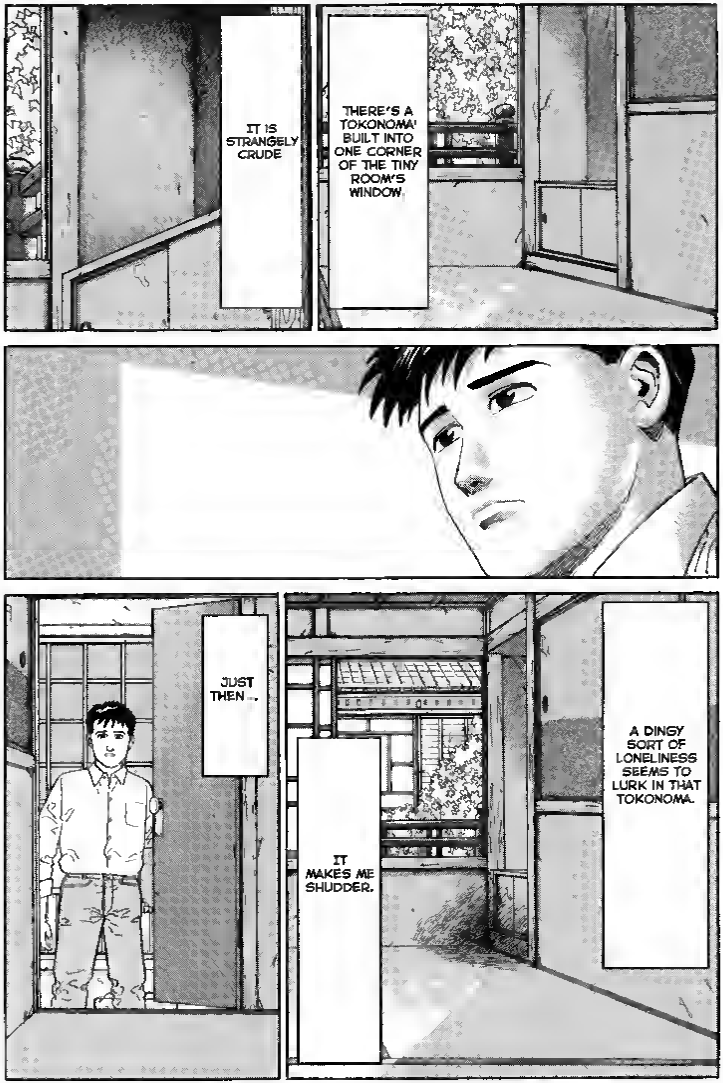
BYE, NOW!
HE HEH!
AH...
THAT'S VERY NICE OF YOU!
A SODA
FOR THE YOUNG LADY!
HE HEH!
HE'S ALWAYS KEEN TO HELP.
BUT HE'S A BIT OF A PILL SOMETIMES.
HE SEEMS TO BE A NICE GUY.
WELL,
THANKS!
YEAH,
BUT I'M ONLY HALF WAY THROUGH.
SINCE I'VE GOT TO WORK, I'M NOT GETTING VERY FAR
HMM,
THIS WHAT YOU'RE WORKING ON NOW?

BUT I'VE INTRODUCED SOME EXPERIMENTAL ELEMENTS
THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT
IT SEEMS LIKE THE STORY IS GOING TO BE OVER-DONE
I DON'T GET THIS TITLE
"CHLORO-FORM"...
YEAH.
I WANTED TO WRITE SOMETHING ABOUT A DREAMLIKE SEMICONSCIOUS STATE
ISN'T THAT WHAT THEY USE TO PUT FROGS TO SLEEP BEFORE DISSECTING THEM?
CHLORO-FORM.
DOES IT SEEM SOMEWHAT GLOOMY?
WHAT DO YOU THINK? IS IT BORING?
HMM
DREAMLIKE
THE BIG COMIC PRIZE FOR NEW AUTHORS IS 300,ODD YEN...
OH, WELL, IT'S JUST A DREAM.
WHEN I'M ALONE IN THIS ROOM,
WITH NOTHING ELSE TO DO BUT DRAW,
THAT'S HOW I FEEL

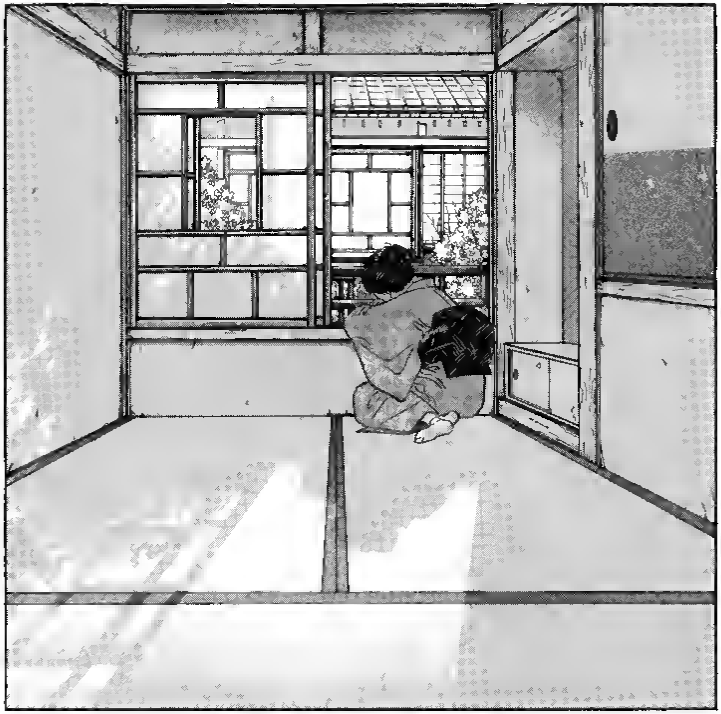

...
KREK
SWOOT
CLOP
CLOP
'LO

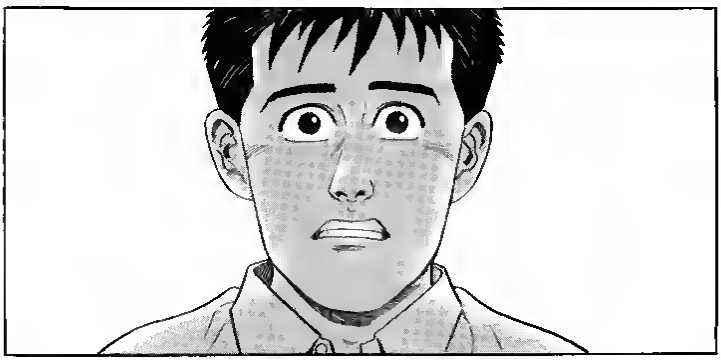

HE MUST'VE BEEN WATCHING US FOR SOME TIME.
WHAT A WEIRD GUY.
YEAH, I'VE NEVER SPOKEN TO HIM EITHER.
CLOP
IT'S THE NEXT-DOOR NEIGHBOR WHO TELLS ME ALL ABOUT THESE THINGS.
OH, REALLY?
APPARENTLY HE'S AN APPRENTICE SUSHI-CHEF IN SOME RESTAURANT.
HE MUST BE VERY SHY.
I LEARN LATER THAT HE ALSO GAVE UP TRYING TO BECOME A SUSHI-CHEF AND HAS RETURNED TO HIS HOME TOWN.
WHILE I'M GONE FOR WORK REASONS, THAT YOUNG GUY DISAPPEARS. IT SEEMS HE'S MOVED AWAY.
A FEW DAYS LATER...


SLAMMM
THE ROOM IS AS NARROW AS MINE, EMPTY AND SHADOWY THE WINDOW LETS IN THE WARM AFTERNOON SUN.
FOR SOME REASON, I LOOK INTO THE ROOM WHICH IS NOW TENANT-LESS

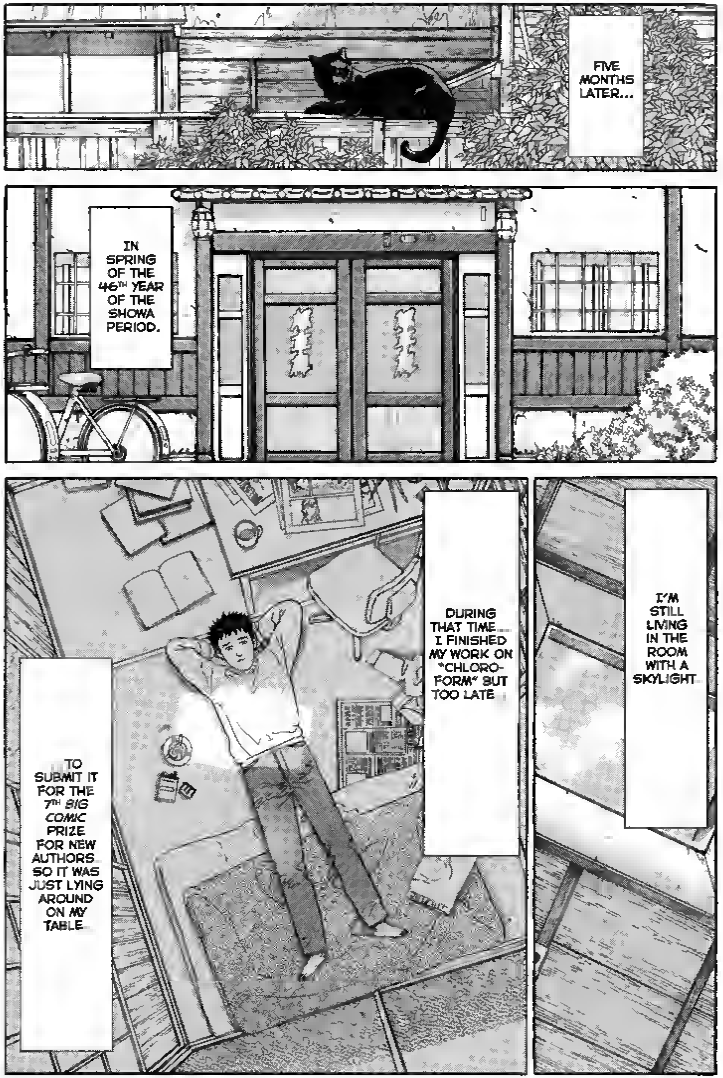

IT IS STRANGELY CRUDE
THERE'S A TOKONOMA[1] BUILT INTO ONE CORNER OF THE TINY ROOM'S WINDOW.
JUST THEN...
IT MAKES ME SHUDDER.
A DINGY SORT OF LONELINESS SEEMS TO LURK IN THAT TOKONOMA.

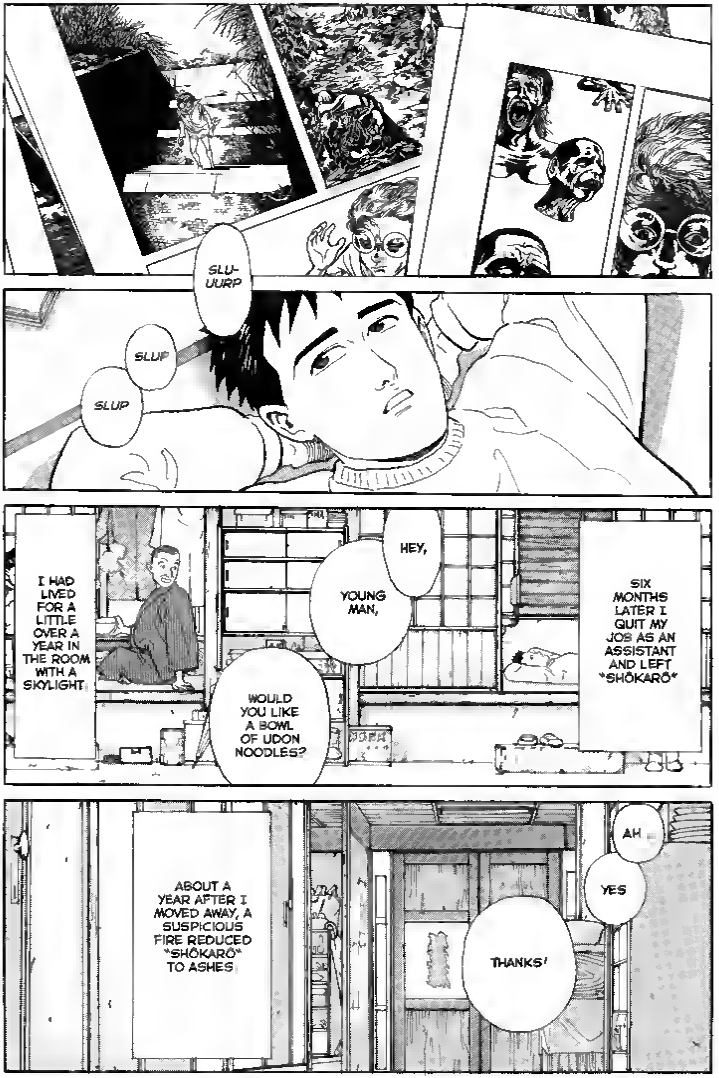
(1) A NICHE OR ALCOVE USED FOR DISPLAYING A FLOWER ARRANGEMENT OR ART OR TO CARRY INCENSE OFTEN SAID TO BE THE SOUL OF A JAPANESE HOUSE.



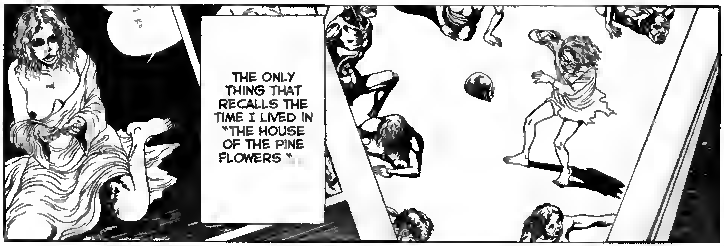


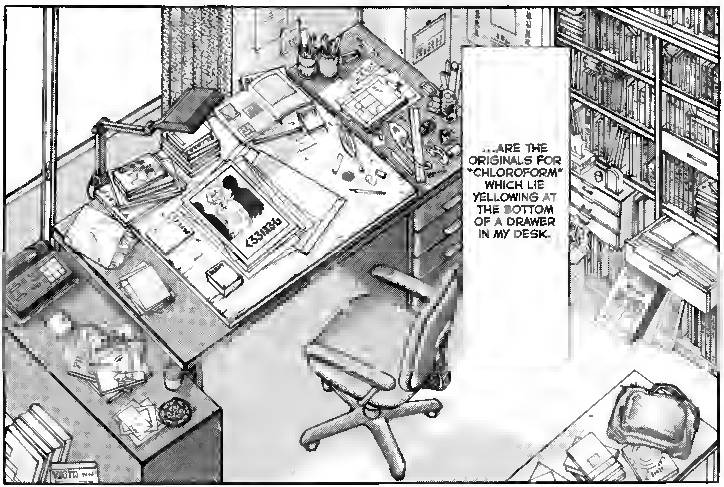
FOR A SECOND
I SAW A WOMAN LEANING ON THE SILL AND CRYING...
...
SOMETIMES WHEN I'M ALL ALONE THERE, I FEEL OVERWHELMED...

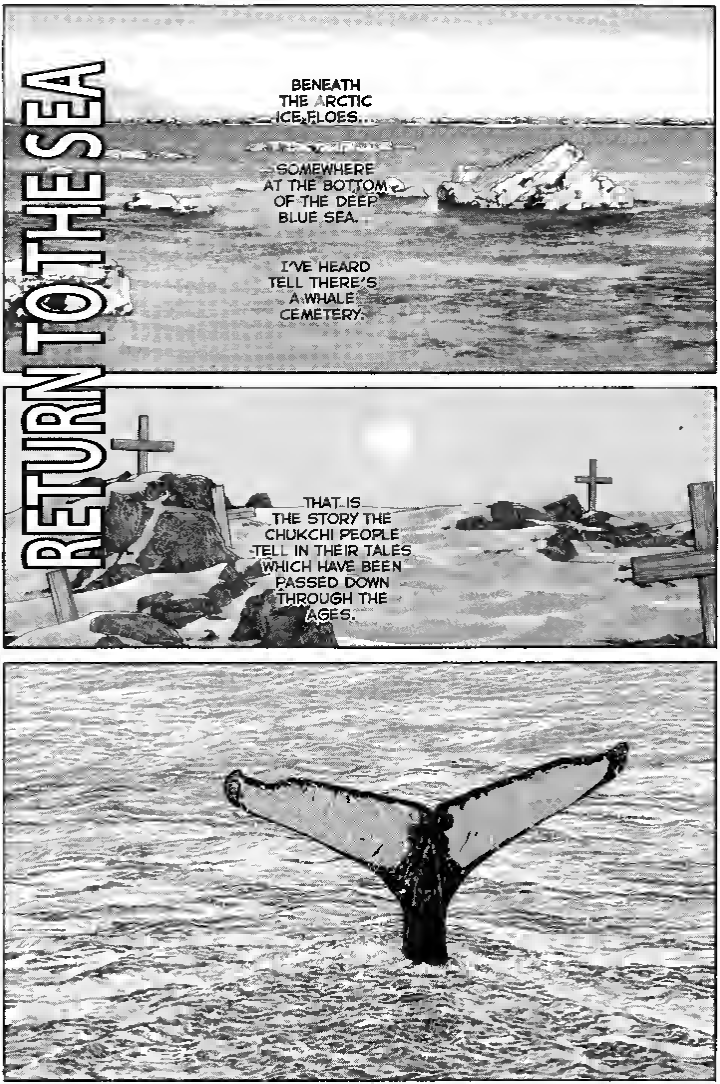

FIVE MONTHS LATER...
IN SPRING OF THE 46TH YEAR OF THE SHOWA PERIOD.
I'M STILL LIVING IN THE ROOM WITH A SKYLIGHT.
DURING THAT TIME... I FINISHED MY WORK ON "CHLOROFORM" BUT TOO LATE
TO SUBMIT IT FOR THE 7TH BIG COMIC PRIZE FOR NEW AUTHORS. SO IT WAS JUST LYING AROUND ON MY TABLE.

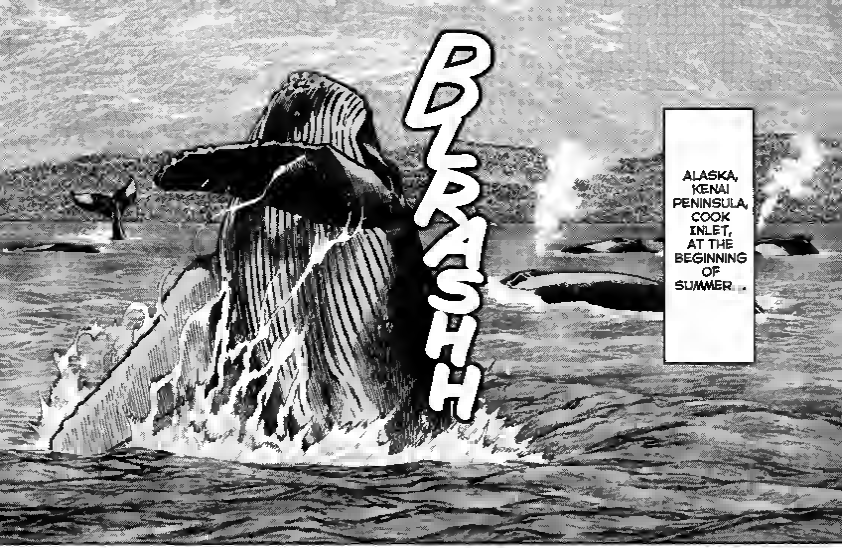

SLU-
UURP
SLUP
SLUP
I HAD LIVED FOR A LITTLE OVER A YEAR IN THE ROOM WITH A SKYLIGHT.
HEY, YOUNG MAN,
WOULD YOU LIKE A BOWL OF UDON NOODLES?
SIX MONTHS LATER I QUIT MY JOB AS AN ASSISTANT AND LEFT "SHŌKARŌ"
ABOUT A YEAR AFTER I MOVED AWAY, A SUSPICIOUS FIRE REDUCED "SHŌKARŌ" TO ASHES.
AH...
YES
THANKS!

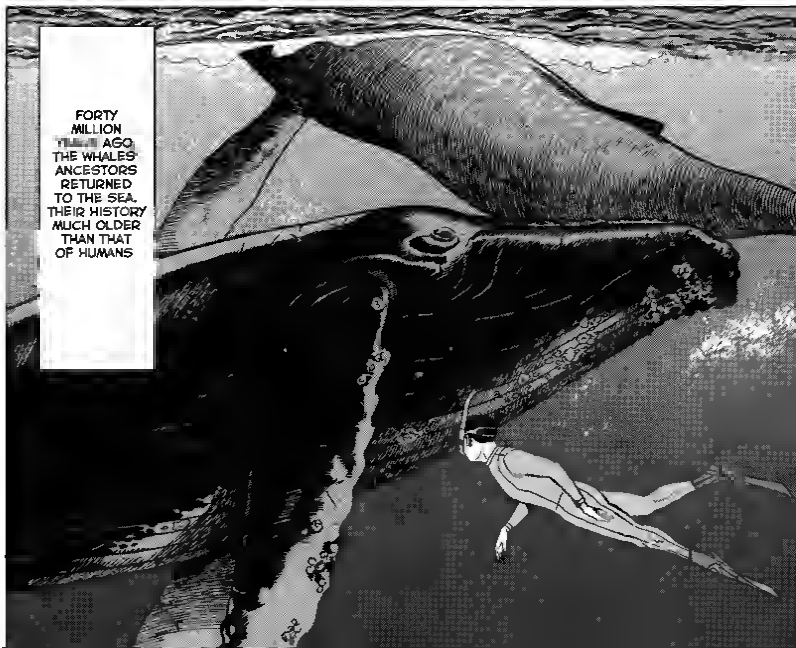
AND THE WHOLE AREA WAS REZONED AND DEVELOPED SO THAT THERE ARE NO REMINDERS LEFT OF WHAT IT WAS LIKE BACK THEN.
NOW, IN THE PLACE WHERE "SHŌKARŌ" HAD BEEN, NEW LUXURY HIGH-RISES HAVE BEEN BUILT.

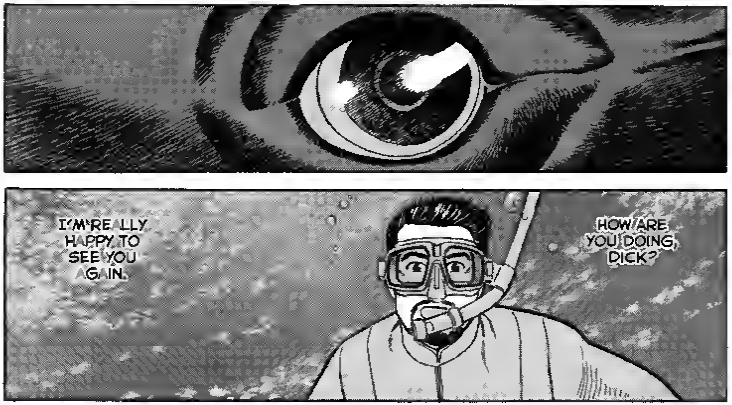

THE ONLY THING THAT RECALLS THE TIME I LIVED IN "THE HOUSE OF THE PINE FLOWERS."

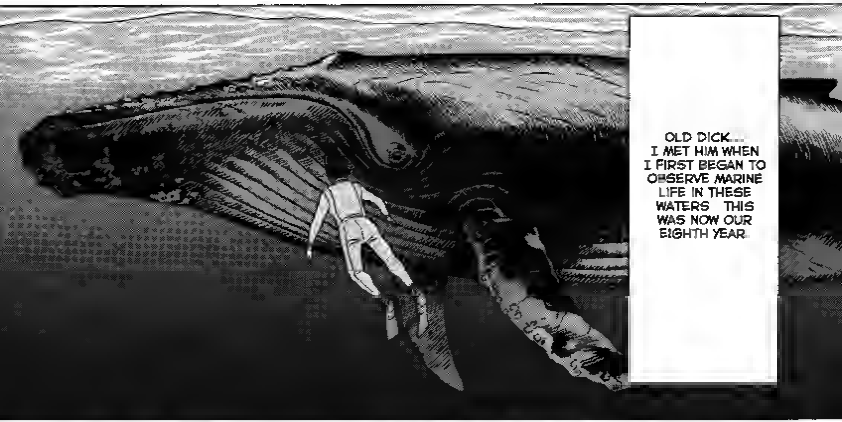

...ARE THE ORIGINALS FOR "CHLOROFORM" WHICH LIE YELLOWING AT THE BOTTOM OF A DRAWER IN MY DESK.


RETURN TO THE SEA
BENEATH THE ARCTIC ICE FLOES...
SOMEWHERE AT THE BOTTOM OF THE DEEP BLUE SEA.
I'VE HEARD TELL THERE'S A WHALE CEMETERY.
THAT IS THE STORY THE CHUKCHI PEOPLE TELL IN THEIR TALES WHICH HAVE BEEN PASSED DOWN THROUGH THE AGES.


BURASHH
ALASKA, KENAI PENINSULA, COOK INLET, AT THE BEGINNING OF SUMMER...

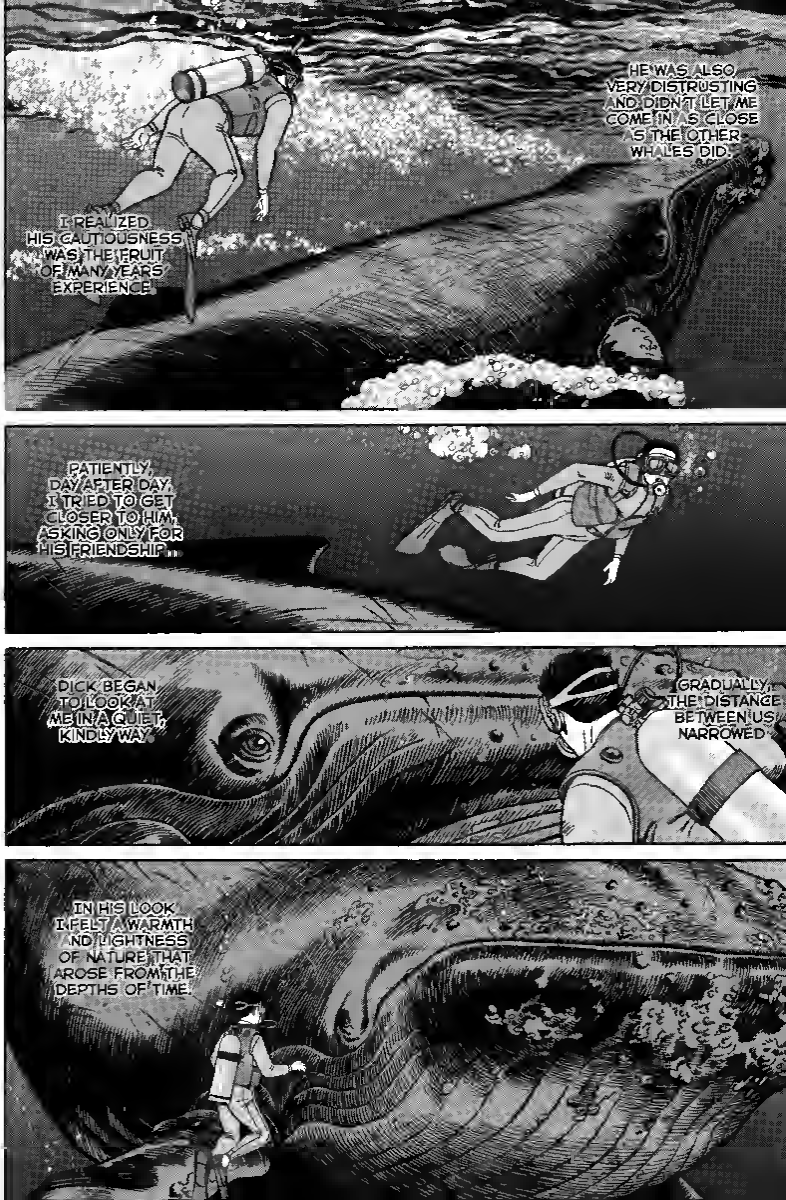

FORTY MILLION [illegible] AGO, THE WHALES' ANCESTORS RETURNED TO THE SEA. THEIR HISTORY MUCH OLDER THAN THAT OF HUMANS

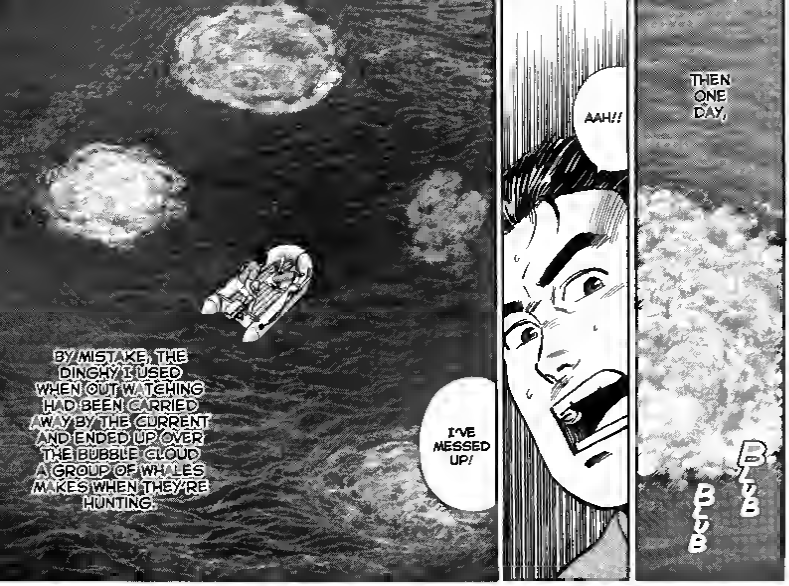

I'M REALLY HAPPY TO SEE YOU AGAIN.
HOW ARE YOU DOING, DICK?

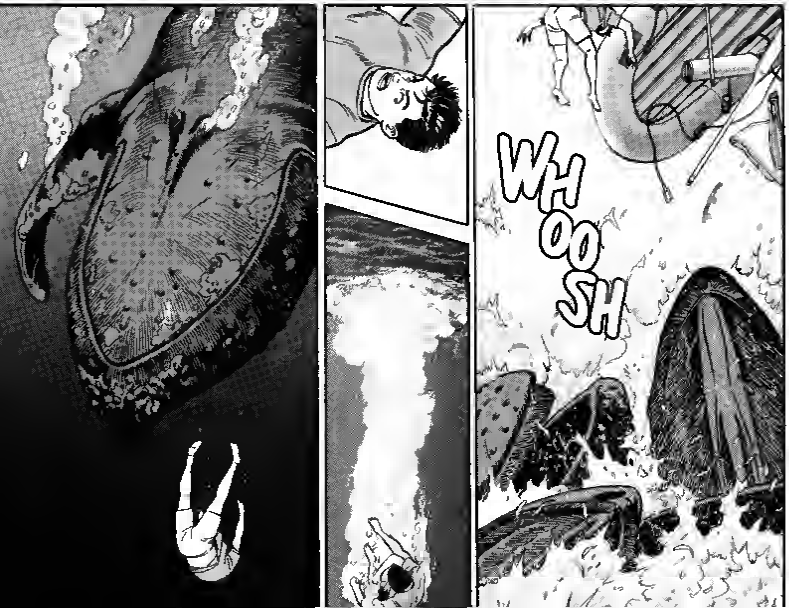

OLD DICK... I MET HIM WHEN I FIRST BEGAN TO OBSERVE MARINE LIFE IN THESE WATERS. THIS WAS NOW OUR EIGHTH YEAR.

HIS TAIL WAS TORN FROM THE BITES OF SHARKS AND ORCA WHALES... A SIGN THAT HE HAD BEEN STRUGGLING TO SURVIVE FOR YEARS AND YEARS
HIS BODY WAS COVERED WITH SCARS.

YES,
HE SURVIVED THIS YEAR TOO...
HE'S BACK AGAIN, EH?
PHEW
FLASH
I REMEMBER THE FIRST TIME I MET DICK...
DICK'S GIGANTIC BODY MADE HIM STAND OUT FROM THE OTHER BOWHEAD WHALES.

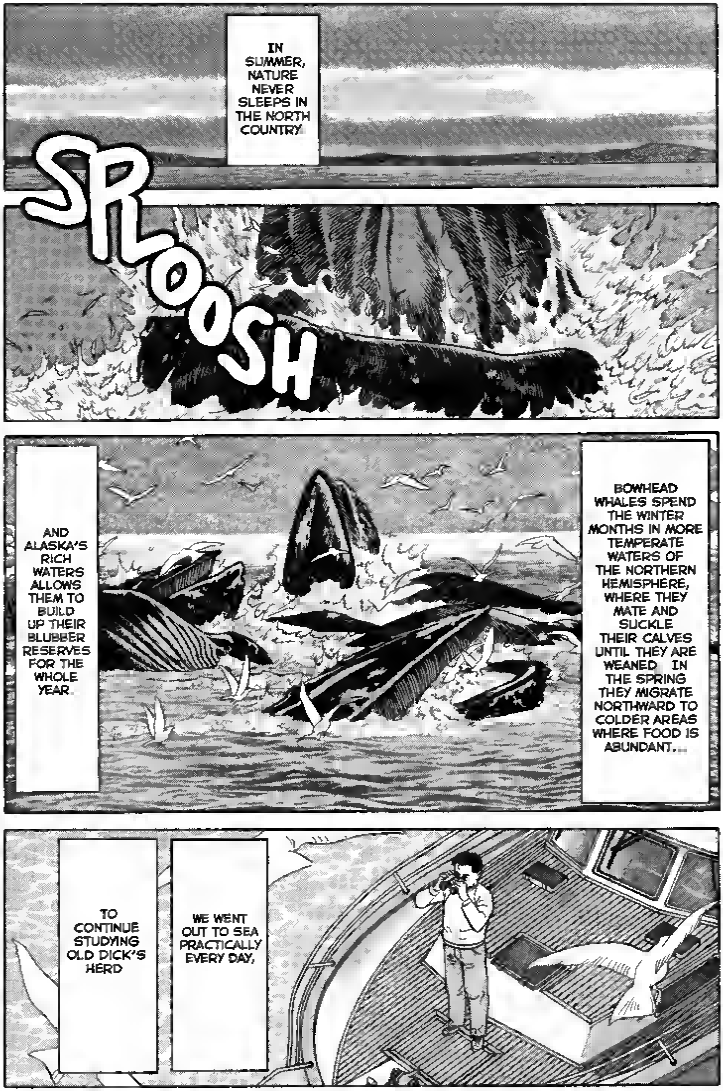

I REALIZED HIS CAUTIOUSNESS WAS THE FRUIT OF MANY YEARS' EXPERIENCE.
HE WAS ALSO VERY DISTRUSTING AND DIDN'T LET ME COME IN AS CLOSE AS THE OTHER WHALES DID.
PATIENTLY, DAY AFTER DAY, I TRIED TO GET CLOSER TO HIM, ASKING ONLY FOR HIS FRIENDSHIP.
DICK BEGAN TO LOOK AT ME IN A QUIET, KINDLY WAY.
GRADUALLY, THE DISTANCE BETWEEN US NARROWED.
IN HIS LOOK I FELT A WARMTH AND LIGHTNESS OF NATURE THAT AROSE FROM THE DEPTHS OF TIME.


THEN ONE DAY,
AAH!!
I'VE MESSED UP!
BY MISTAKE, THE DINGHY I USED WHEN OUT W. TCHING HAD BEEN CARRIED AW.Y BY THE CURRENT AND ENDED UP OVER THE BUBBLE CLOUD A GROUP OF WH.LES MAKES WHEN THEY'RE HUNTING.

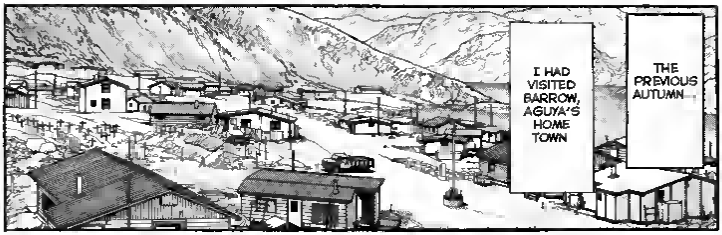

WHOOSH

WHANG
IT WAS STRANGE, BIT LIKE SCALES YET SUPPLE AND ROBUST.
I TOUCHED DICK FOR THE FIRST TIME.
IF DICK HADN'T GIVEN ME A BOOST AT JUST THAT MOMENT, I WOULD HAVE DROWNED, CRUSHED BY THE POD OF WHALES. .
I KNOW IT SOUNDS INCREDIBLE BUT DICK SAVED MY LIFE

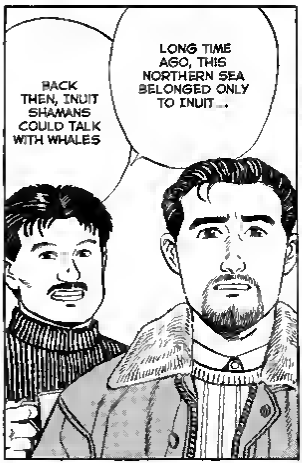
OLD DICK...
LOOKS LIKE HE'S A BIT LISTLESS...
COULD BE...
COULD BE DICK OLDER THAN WE THOUGHT?
HE SEEMS TO HAVE GOTTEN OLDER THIS WINTER...
AGUYA...
LET'S TRY AND KEEP TRACK OF HIM AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE, OK?
THIS YEAR MIGHT BE LAST TIME WE SEE HIM...
EVERY SUMMER HE WORKED WITH ME IN MY STUDY OF THE HABITS OF WHALES.
AGUYA WAS AN INUIT WHO LIVED IN BARROW, ALASKA.

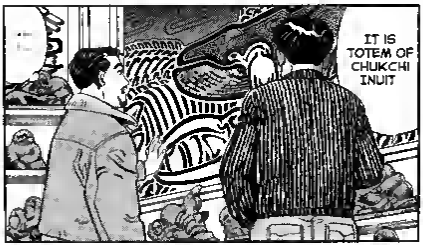

IN SUMMER, NATURE NEVER SLEEPS IN THE NORTH COUNTRY.
SPLOOSH
AND ALASKA'S RICH WATERS ALLOWS THEM TO BUILD UP THEIR BLUBBER RESERVES FOR THE WHOLE YEAR.
BOWHEAD WHALES SPEND THE WINTER MONTHS IN MORE TEMPERATE WATERS OF THE NORTHERN HEMISPHERE, WHERE THEY MATE AND SUCKLE THEIR CALVES UNTIL THEY ARE WEANED. IN THE SPRING THEY MIGRATE NORTHWARD TO COLDER AREAS WHERE FOOD IS ABUNDANT...
TO CONTINUE STUDYING OLD DICK'S HERD
WE WENT OUT TO SEA PRACTICALLY EVERY DAY,

IT COULD BE THAT AGE WAS KEEPING DICK FROM BREACHING HIGH OUT OF THE WATER AS BOWHEADS DO...
EEYAHO-OH EEYAHO-OH
WHEN WE GROW OLD AND COUGHS WRACK US AND WE SEE THAT THE FINAL CURTAIN IS ABOUT TO FALL WE RETURN TO OUR ORIGIN, BACK TO THE DEEP SEA ABYSS
THE ONE ABOUT THE WHALE CEMETERY
HUH?
DO YOU BELIEVE IN THE OLD INUIT LEGENDS?
AGUYA,
...
THE WHALE IS SYMBOL OF CHUKCHI PEOPLE
OUR LEGENDS ALWAYS SPEAK TRUTH...
OF COURSE, I DO.
YES,

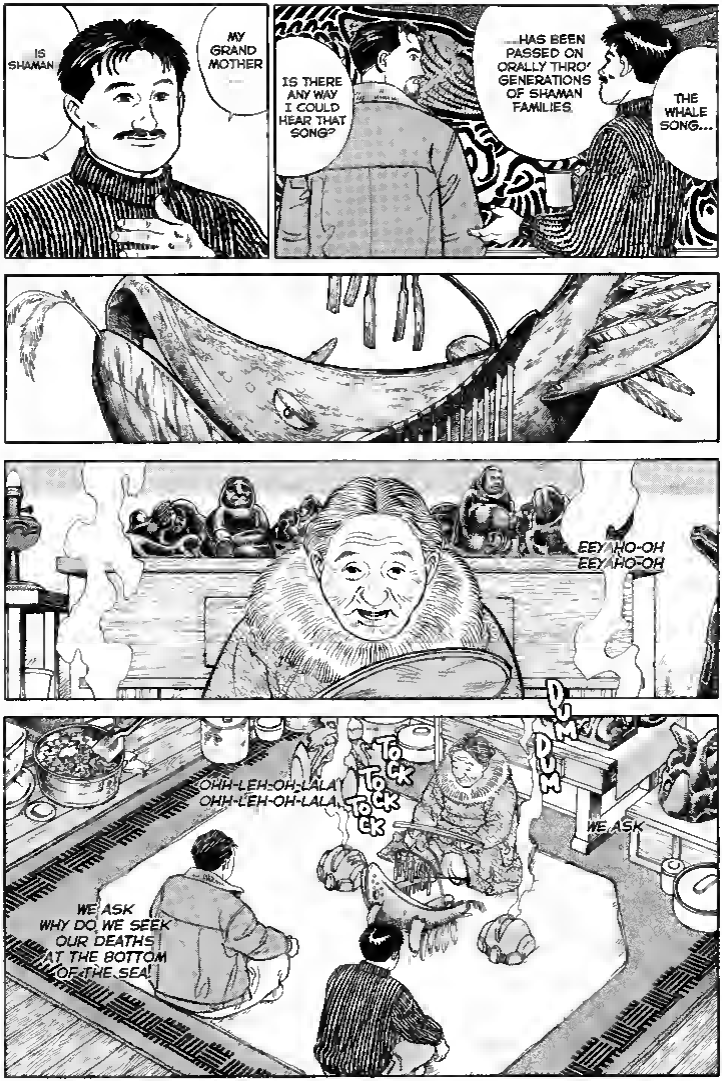

I HAD VISITED BARROW, AGUYA'S HOME TOWN
THE PREVIOUS AUTUMN...

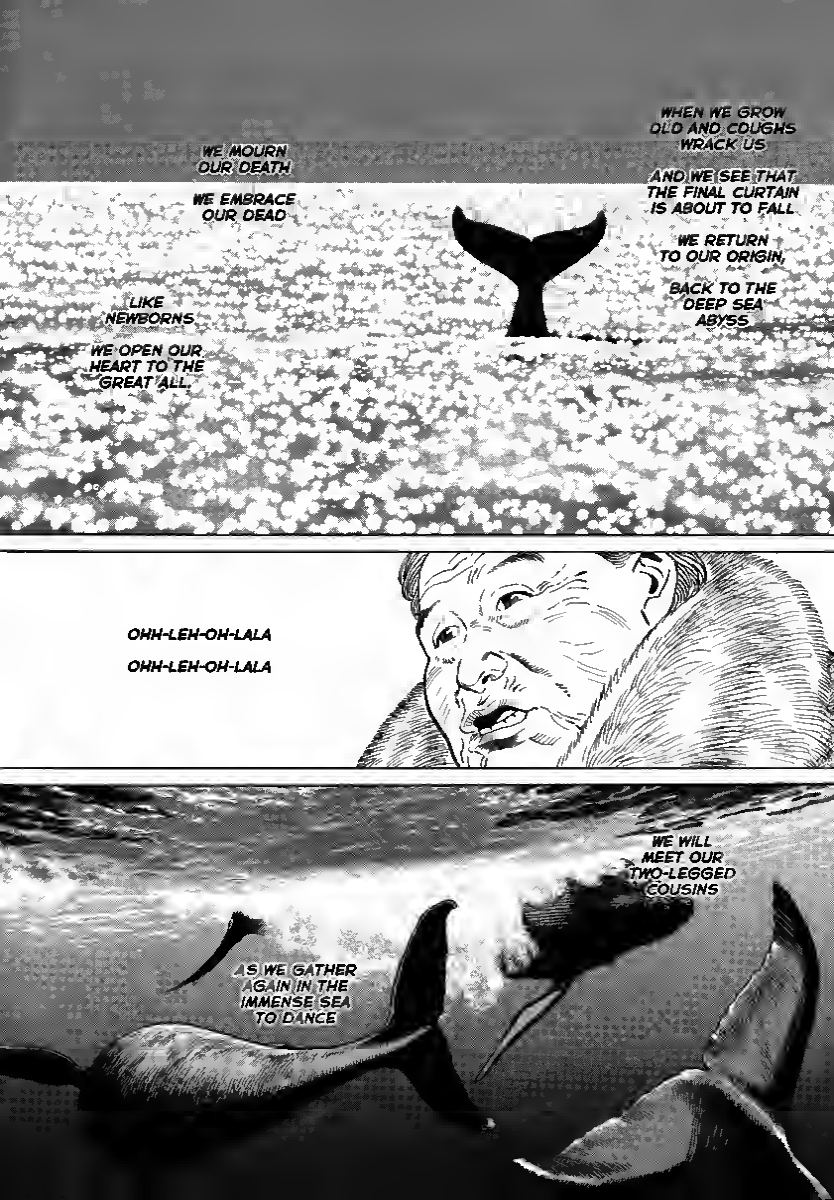
WHAT'S THIS?


BACK THEN, INUIT SHAMANS COULD TALK WITH WHALES
LONG TIME AGO, THIS NORTHERN SEA BELONGED ONLY TO INUIT...

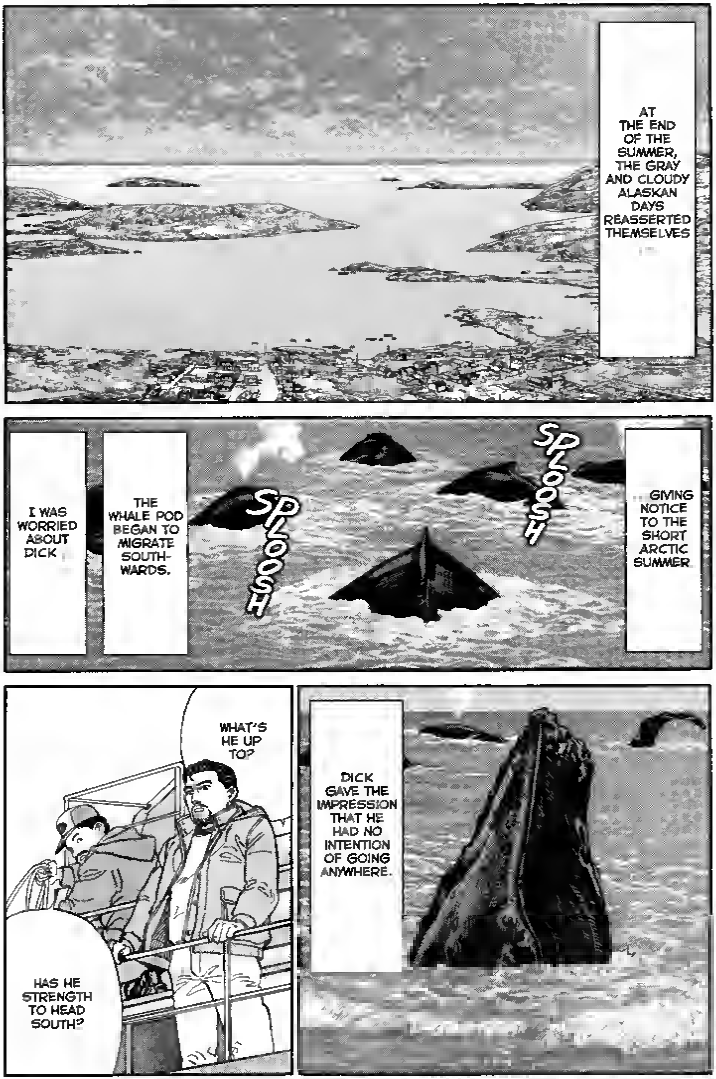

IT IS TOTEM OF CHUKCHI INUIT

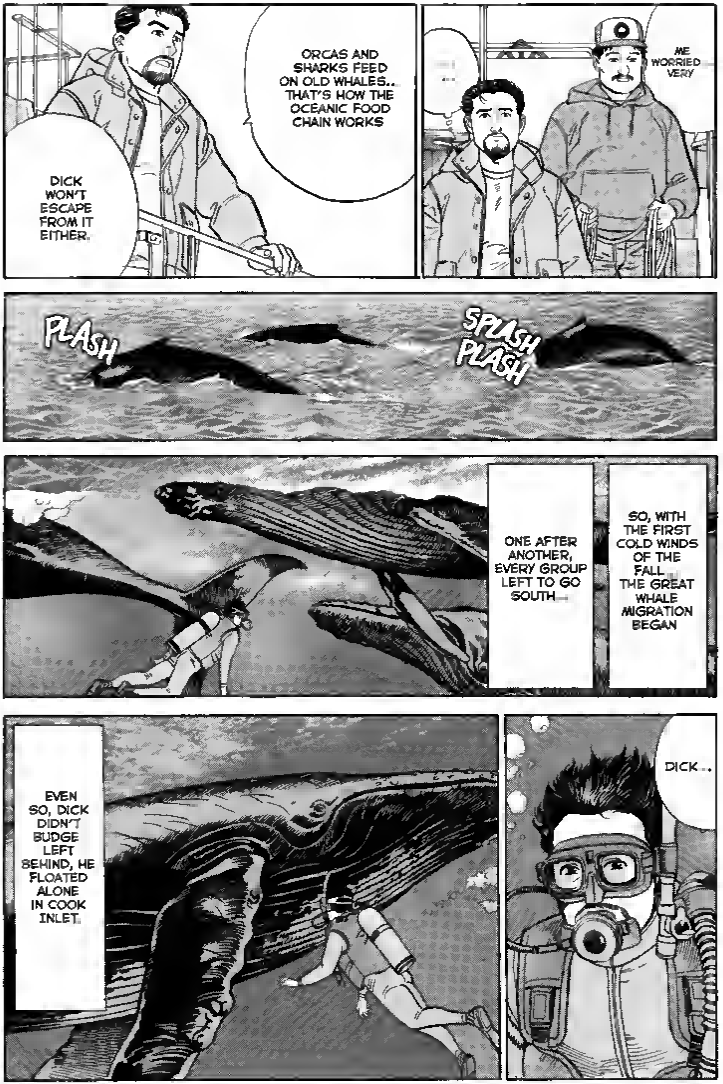
A DRAWING OF ANCIENT LEGEND OF OUR PEOPLE.
WHALE WHO SLEEPS OVER "SACRED ABYSS"...


IS SHAMAN
MY GRAND MOTHER
IS THERE ANY WAY I COULD HEAR THAT SONG?
HAS BEEN PASSED ON ORALLY THRO' GENERATIONS OF SHAMAN FAMILIES.
THE WHALE SONG...
EEY HO-OH EEY HO-OH
DUM DUM
TOCK TOCK TOCK
OHH-LEH-OH-LALAY OHH-LEH-OH-LALA
WE ASK
WE ASK WHY DO WE SEEK OUR DEATHS AT THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA!


WE MOURN OUR DEATH
WE EMBRACE OUR DEAD
LIKE NEWBORNS
WE OPEN OUR HEART TO THE GREAT ALL
WHEN WE GROW OLD AND COUGHS WRACK US
AND WE SEE THAT THE FINAL CURTAIN IS ABOUT TO FALL
WE RETURN TO OUR ORIGIN,
BACK TO THE DEEP SEA ABYSS
OHH-LEH-OH-LALA
OHH-LEH-OH-LALA
AS WE GATHER AGAIN IN THE IMMENSE SEA TO DANCE
WE WILL MEET OUR TWO-LEGGED COUSINS

FOR THEM, DEATH AND SLEEP ARE ONE—DREAMTIME.
AND THEY HAVE A PLACE FOR THAT DREAM.
THE WHALES SPEAK OF A DREAMTIME.
DO YOU UNDERSTAND?
DURING THIS PERIOD IN WHICH NO ONE GROWS OLD, THEY WAIT UNTIL IT IS TIME TO BE REBORN.
WHEN THE TIME COMES FOR THEM TO DIE, THEY SINK DOWN INTO THE "SACRED ABYSS" AT THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA AND SLEEP.
I DREAMED OF SEEING THIS GREAT SEA WORK OF THE INUIT SONG FOR MYSELF.
FROM THEN ON, THE WHALE CEMETERY WAS ALWAYS ON MY MIND.


AT THE END OF THE SUMMER, THE GRAY AND CLOUDY ALASKAN DAYS REASSERTED THEMSELVES
...GIVING NOTICE TO THE SHORT ARCTIC SUMMER.
SPLOOSH
SPLOOSH
THE WHALE POD BEGAN TO MIGRATE SOUTH-WARDS.
I WAS WORRIED ABOUT DICK.
DICK GAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT HE HAD NO INTENTION OF GOING ANYWHERE.
WHAT'S HE UP TO?
HAS HE STRENGTH TO HEAD SOUTH?

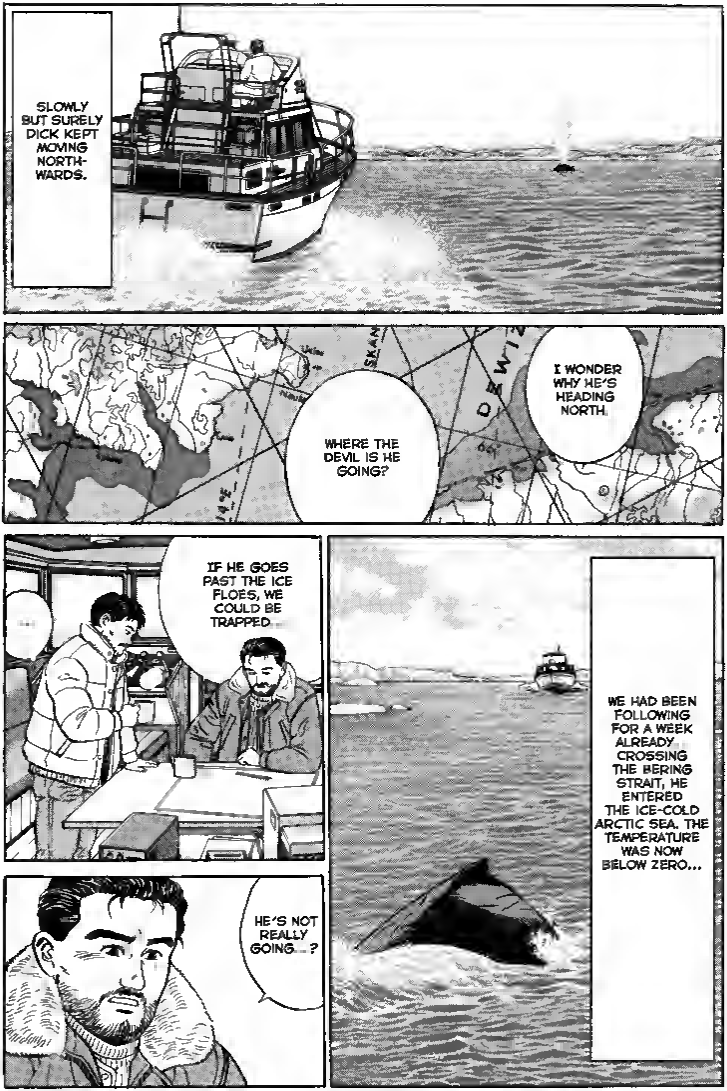

DICK WON'T ESCAPE FROM IT EITHER.
ORCAS AND SHARKS FEED ON OLD WHALES.. THAT'S HOW THE OCEANIC FOOD CHAIN WORKS
...!
...
ME WORRIED VERY
PLASH
SPLASH PLASH
ONE AFTER ANOTHER, EVERY GROUP LEFT TO GO SOUTH...
SO, WITH THE FIRST COLD WINDS OF THE FALL... THE GREAT WHALE MIGRATION BEGAN
EVEN SO, DICK DIDN'T BUDGE LEFT BEHIND, HE FLOATED ALONE IN COOK INLET.
DICK...

THEN, SEVERAL DAYS LATER, HE STARTED SWIMMING IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION... NORTHWARDS!
PLOOSHH
ANYHOW, LET'S FOLLOW HIM!
...
...
HAS HE LOST HIS SENSE OF DIRECTION OR WHAT?!
THAT'S ODD!!
STORM COMING WAIT FOR TOMORROW.
NO WAY!! IF WE DAWDLE, WE'LL LOSE SIGHT OF DICK...
...
...
THE SKY OFF TO WEST LOOK BAD.
NO, WE CAN'T!!

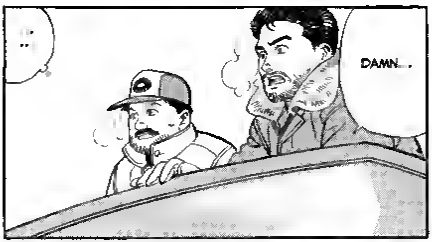
...
...
I DON'T CARE...
GO AGAINST NATURE NOT GOOD.
I'LL GO ALONE!
WITH YOU HERE, IT'LL BE ALRIGHT
YOU WANT SINK BOAT? THAT IT?
AGUYA
OK, YOU HAPPY?
BAD STORM.
SWASHH
DICK DRIFTED UP THE ALASKAN COAST...

THE STORM, WHICH HAD BEEN GETTING STRONGER, HIT US THAT VERY NIGHT.
WHOM
BOOM
WHOM
THE STORM LASTED TILL DAYBREAK, THEN MOVED EASTWARD.
BUT WE HAD LOST SIGHT OF DICK.

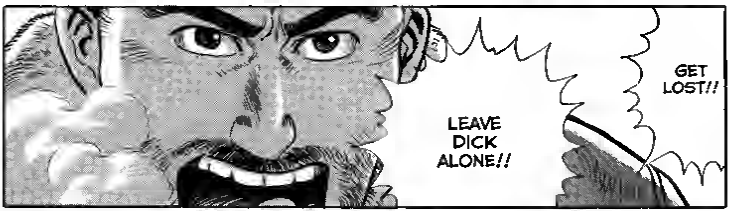
WE WENT ROUND THE ALASKA PENINSULA AND HEADED NORTH INTO THE BERING SEA.
A FEW DAYS LATER...
AH!
A SPOUT!!
LOOK!
...!!
THERE!
IT'S DICK!!
PLOOSH

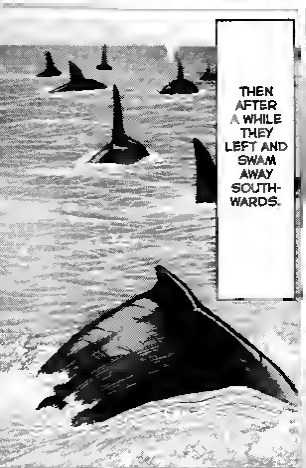

SLOWLY BUT SURELY DICK KEPT MOVING NORTH-WARDS.
I WONDER WHY HE'S HEADING NORTH.
WHERE THE DEVIL IS HE GOING?
IF HE GOES PAST THE ICE FLOES, WE COULD BE TRAPPED.
WE HAD BEEN FOLLOWING FOR A WEEK ALREADY. CROSSING THE BERING STRAIT, HE ENTERED THE ICE-COLD ARCTIC SEA. THE TEMPERATURE WAS NOW BELOW ZERO...
HE'S NOT REALLY GOING...?

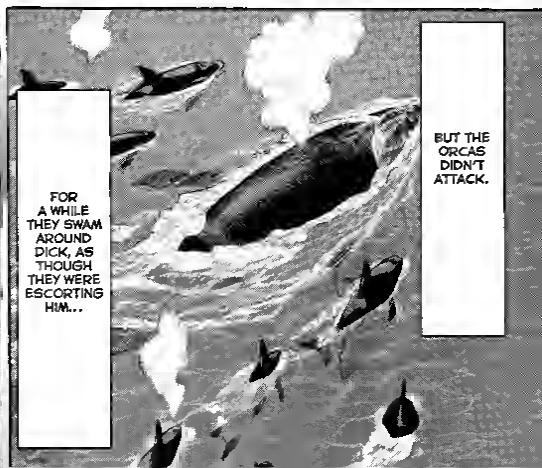
AAH!!


...
DAMN...

ALL ROUND DICK!!
ORCAS!!


LEAVE DICK ALONE!!
GET LOST!!

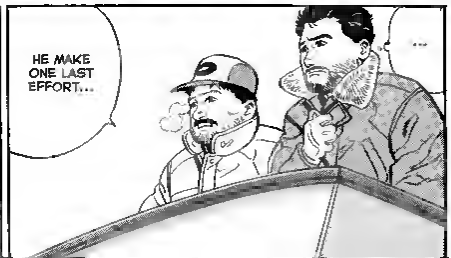

THEN AFTER A WHILE THEY LEFT AND SWAM AWAY SOUTH-WARDS.


FOR A WHILE THEY SWAM AROUND DICK, AS THOUGH THEY WERE ESCORTING HIM...
BUT THE ORCAS DIDN'T ATTACK.

DICK CONTINUED STEADILY NORTHWARDS, AS THOUGH NOTHING HAD HAPPENED

SPLOOSHH

DICK GO BACK... TO HIS ORIGIN...


HE MAKE ONE LAST EFFORT...
...

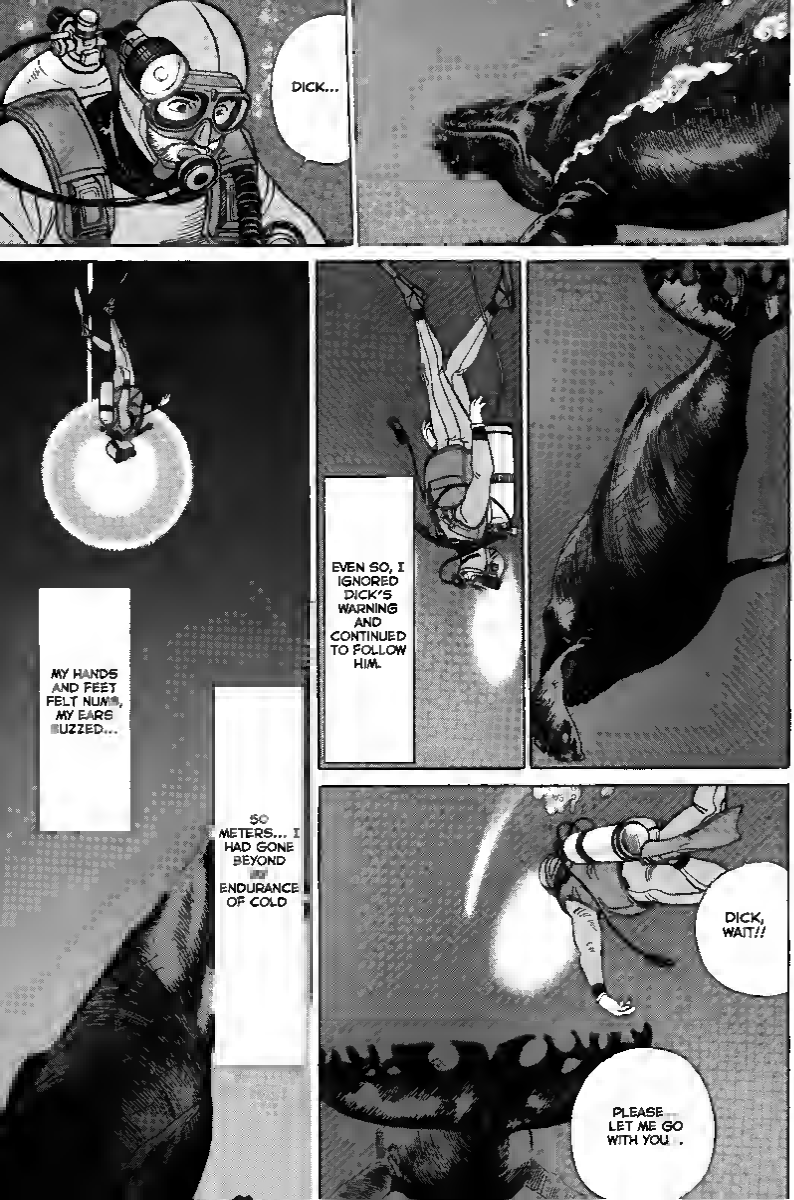
SOME MILES NORTHWEST OF CAPE LISBURNE, ON THE EDGE OF THE ARCTIC OCEAN ICE-SHEET, FOR THE FIRST TIME THIS YEAR, DICK SHOWED SOME OF HIS OLD SPIRIT WITH A VIGOROUS JUMP.
BLRASHH
OOH!!
AGUYA, I'M GOING DOWN!!
I'M FOLLOWING DICK!!
SWOOF..
AND WITH THE FLUKE-UP DIVE WHALES PERFORM BEFORE GOING UNDERWATER FOR A LONG PERIOD, HE DISAPPEARED

EVEN WITH DRY SUIT. WATER TOO COLD. DIVING NOT POSSIBLE.
I'LL GO DOWN AS FAR AS I CAN. WHEN I TUG THE ROPE, HAUL ME UP!
IS DANGER !!
DON'T!!
BETTER SAY GOOD-BYE HERE TO DICK AND LEAVE HIM GO DIE IN PEACE. MORE RESPECT.
WE'VE OONE ENOUGH.
YOU NOT KNOW DANGER OF THIS SEA!!
IT'S THE CHANCE OF A LIFETIME!!
YOU'LL DIE!!
I SHOULDN'T HAVE LET YOU HEAR SONG
I KNEW,
IT'S MY JOB NO, IT'S MY DREAM!!
IF I FOLLOW DICK NOW, I'LL FIND OUT IF THE WHALE CEMETERY REALLY DOES EXIST!!
.....
...
I FEEL... I BEAR DEEP RESPON-SIBILITY...

...
BUT THIS IS HOLY RITE OF WHALES. WE NO RIGHT TO WATCH
YES... I UNDERSTAND THIS.
I WENT DOWN, IN SPITE OF AGUYA'S WARNINGS
SPONG
OH!!
PHHHHH

FOR A WHALE SOUNDING, HE SEEMED TO LINGER, AS THOUGH IN SLOW MOTION.
IT WAS BRIGHTER UNDERWATER THAN I HAD ANTICIPATED I COULD SEE DICK CLEARLY AS HE DOVE DOW...

20 METERS DOWN DICK WAS BEING SWALLOWED UP BY A DARK BLUE WORLD WHERE DAYLIGHT NEVER REACHED...
THREE MINUTES AFTER STARTING THE DIVE... THE BITING COLD PENE-TRATING THE DRY SUIT...
...I WAS FINALLY ABLE TO CATCH UP WITH DICK.
BUT...
DICK SWATTED AT ME WITH HIS PECTORAL FIN...
NOT COME...?!
YOU DON'T WANT ME TO GO WITH YOU...?

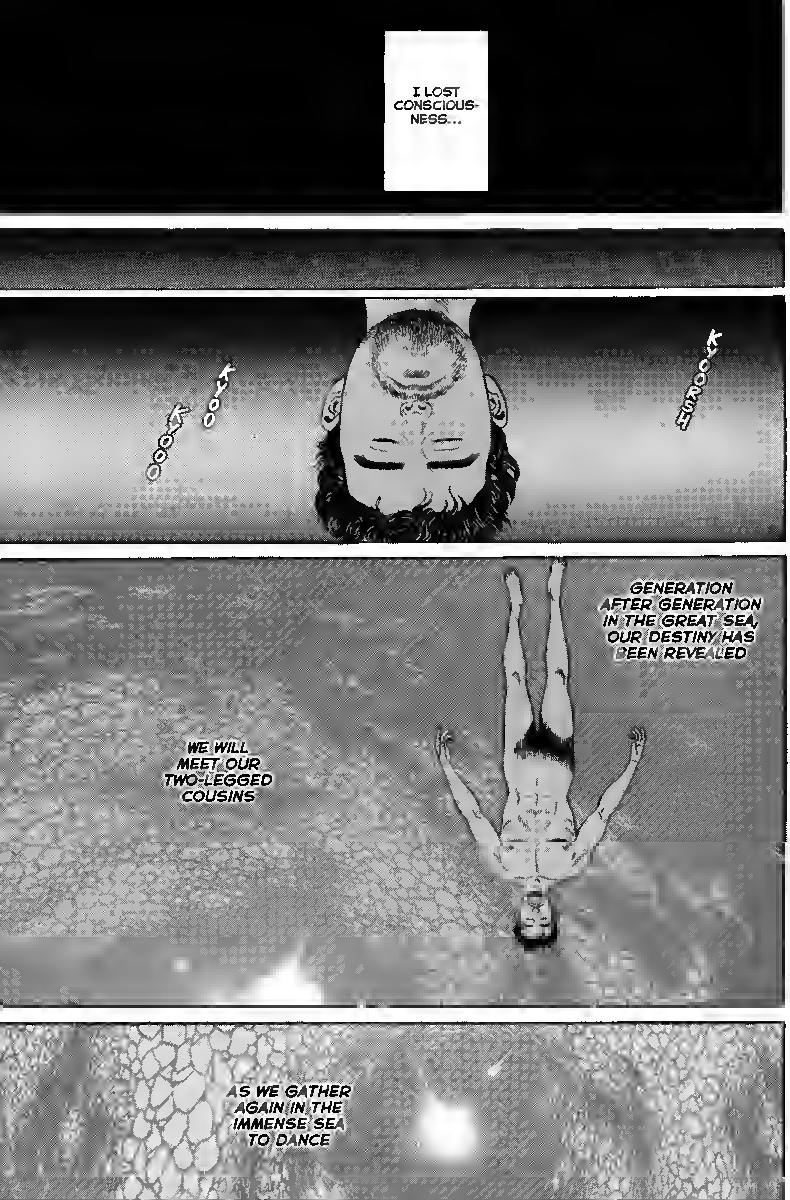

DICK...
EVEN SO, I IGNORED DICK'S WARNING AND CONTINUED TO FOLLOW HIM.
MY HANDS AND FEET FELT NUM■, MY EARS ■UZZED...
50 METERS... I HAD GONE BEYOND ■■ ENDURANCE OF COLD
DICK, WAIT!!
PLEASE LET ME GO WITH YOU .

ALL MY SENSES WERE DULLED AND I BEGAN TO NOT FEEL THE COLD ANY MORE.
I CAN'T GO ON...
THIS IS THE LIMIT...
UUUH ...
I TRIED TO SIGNAL AGUYA WITH THE ROPE, BUT MY HANDS WOULDN'T RESPOND...
I THOUGHT ABOUT GOING BACK, BUT MY BODY JUST KEPT SINKING...
OUT OF THE CORNER OF MY EYE I SAW DICK TURN TOWARD ME...

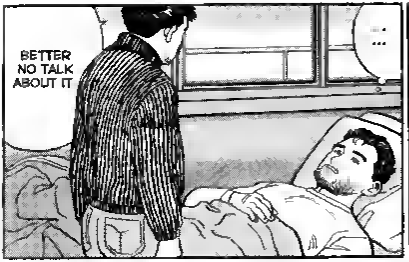
DICK...
...ALL RIGHT.
WE'RE GOING TOGETHER.
I WAS LOSING CONSCIOUSNESS MY MENTAL FACULTIES WERE DIMINISHING...
I FELT LIKE I WASN'T EVEN BREATHING ANYMORE
BOBOOM
IN A VAGUE SORT OF WAY, DICK'S QUIET HEARTBEAT COMFORTED ME...
BOOBOOM
BOOBOOM

JUST AT THAT MOMENT AS I WAS ABOUT TO LOSE CONSCIOUSNESS I FELT JOY AT BEING ABLE TO SHARE IN THE MYSTERIOUS DEATH RITE I DON'T MIND DYING I THOUGHT
I CAN HEAR A SONG...
KYOOOM
KYOOOM
KYOOOM
OH... OH...
A SONG !!

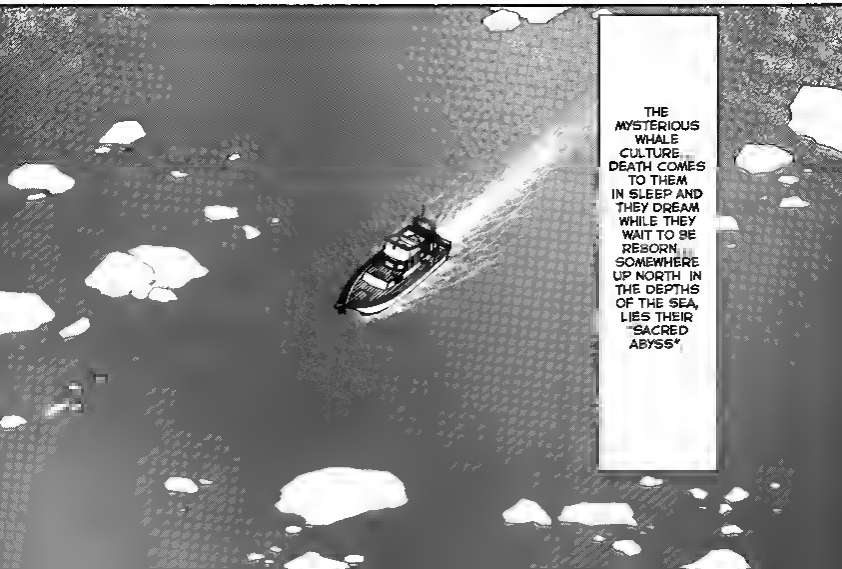
OH!!
WE EMBRACE OUR DEAD
WE MOURN OUR DEATH
THE DEEP SEA ABYSS
WE RETURN TO OUR ORIGIN...
HOOOOOT
HOOOOOT
DICK WAS SINGING — I HAD [illegible] HEARD A SONG LIKE THIS...


I LOST CONSCIOUS-NESS...
KNOCK
KNOCK
KNOCK
GENERATION AFTER GENERATION IN THE GREAT SEA, OUR DESTINY HAS BEEN REVEALED
WE WILL MEET OUR TWO-LEGGED COUSINS
AS WE GATHER AGAIN IN THE IMMENSE SEA TO DANCE

AH
AWAKE?
I SAID ME TEN MINUTES, NOT MORE
IF NOT BACK THEN I PULL BACK - BY FORCE IF NEED!
THANKS
TAKE IT EASY!
YOU NARCED!
UMM..
AGUYA.
THAT...
...
I NO LET YOU DIE.
YOU VERY LUCKY. YOU HAVE STRONG HEART.


BETTER NO TALK ABOUT IT
...

DICK WANT YOU ALONE TO SEE.
YES, I KNOW.


THE MYSTERIOUS WHALE CULTURE... DEATH COMES TO THEM IN SLEEP AND THEY DREAM WHILE THEY WAIT TO BE REBORN. SOMEWHERE UP NORTH IN THE DEPTHS OF THE SEA, LIES THEIR "SACRED ABYSS".